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ABSTRACT

First in a series of seven volumes containing the proceedings of the 1983 Australian Family Research Conference, this publication deals with the formation, structure, and values of family life in Australia. Papers and authors included are: "Priorities in Family Research and Family Law" (Gareth Evans), "The Baby Boom Generation as Reproducers: Fertility in Australia in the Late 1970s and the 1980s" (Peter McDonald), "Leaving Home and Returning Home: A Demographic Study of Young Adults in Australia" (Christabel M. Young), "The Transition to Marriage: Trends in Age at First Marriage and Proportions Marrying in Australia" (Gordon Carmichael), "The Early Stages of the Family Life Cycle in Australia: Demographic Changes since the 1960s" (L. T. Ruzicka), "Changes in Marriage and Sex-Role Attitudes among Young Married Women: 1971-1982" (Helen Glezer), "Nuclear Family No Thanks? Values, the Family and Other Lifestyles" (Frances Baum), "Divorce in Australia 1971-1981: An Examination of Period Analysis" (Virginia Josephian), "Changes in the Demographic Structure of Australian Families: An Analysis of Census Data" (Graeme Hugo), "Changes in Aboriginal Family Formation and Fertility" (Alan Gray), and "Family Formation and Ethnicity" (Siew-Ean Khoo). (RM)

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AUSTRALIAN FAMILY RESEARCH CONFERENCE

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PROCEEDINGS

VOLUME I

**Family Formation,
Structure, Values**

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AUSTRALIAN FAMILY RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Held at Burmann College, Australian National University, Canberra, 23-25 November 1983

PROCEEDINGS

VOLUME I

Family Formation, Structure, Values

Institute of Family Studies
Melbourne

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Volume IV: Policies and families
Volume V: Support Networks
Volume VI: Family life
Volume VII: Closing address and index

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Opening address
Priorities in family research and family law

Senator The Honourable G. J. Evans
Attorney-General of Australia

It is, I can assure you, a pleasant change to come up from the underworld and get away from Godfathers for a while and focus on real fathers; to get away from Royal Commissions and Crimes Commissions and all the rest and to talk about issues relating not to criminal life but to family life.

Most of the praise or blame, as the case may be, for my presence here this morning falls on my illustrious predecessor, Lionel Murphy, who, when setting about the much-needed reform of matrimonial law a decade ago, had the foresight to include within the Family Law Act provision for an Institute of Family Studies.

Contrary to a belief that I understand has some currency - that the Institute was some form of instant sop to the opponents of no-fault divorce - the concept of an Institute to conduct and sponsor research about the family in Australia had by then had a long history. I understand that it had first been suggested by interested officers in the Attorney-General's Department and by the National Marriage Guidance Council as long ago as 1964.

The passage of the legislation did not, however, bring the Institute into being. It is a matter for real regret that, after enactment of the Family Law Act in 1975, it was another 5 years before the Institute became operational. It was a particular tragedy that the Joint Select Committee of the Federal Parliament which reviewed the operation of the Family Law Act throughout 1979 and into 1980 did not have the benefit of work by the Institute.

Having over the past 3 months endured many hours of debate in the Senate on the Family Law Amendment Bill - much of which debate consisted of expressions of concern about the breakdown of marriage and family life in this country (rather than concern for the more technical and practical legal issues about which the Bill was in fact concerned) - I am now more than ever acutely conscious of the importance of serious research and hard data concerning the Australian family and the institution of marriage. What is needed is the collection of comprehensive and accurate data, impartial analysis and wide dissemination of results so as to ensure, in the words of the advance publicity for this Conference, "an informed understanding of the many factors affecting family law".

Importance of this Conference

In view, therefore, of this long recognized, but until recently unfulfilled, need for a body whose principal task would be research concerning the family, it is hardly surprising that legislators, policy makers and all those whose particular field of interest is the family, have had great expectations of the Institute of Family Studies and have eagerly awaited the results of its work.

This Conference will give us all the opportunity to consider and evaluate the first 3 years' work of the Institute. At the Conference the findings of the Institute's own research and studies in a number of areas are to be presented publicly, and again to quote the advance publicity, will be "exposed to critical scrutiny". I need hardly underline the great importance of the Conference for the Institute and for those who stand to benefit from the fruits of its work.

The range of topics to be covered at the Conference is enormous - almost as varied as my own portfolio! The

agenda you have been set demonstrates just how much research work is going on in this country into matters that are of prime importance to policy makers. At the same time, it is too often the case that decisions - particularly in relation to the family - are made without the benefit of adequate research, and conversely, that much important research work is not converted into practical decision-making.

In part this is attributable to a lack of communication between the researchers and the decision-makers. A conference such as this, in which researchers from all over the country bring to Canberra the results of their work, provides an opportunity to bridge that communication gap. I have no doubt that Commonwealth, and of course also State, Government officers who attend this Conference will be better equipped for their advisory and decision-making functions as a result of what they learn here. It is equally to be hoped that those engaged in research will leave Canberra on this occasion with a better appreciation as to how their work can be of practical value.

As far as the Institute of Family Studies in particular is concerned, the interaction between the research work of the Institute and the needs of Government and its official advisers, especially in the field of family law, needs to be carefully considered and clearly spelt out. Having been engaged this year in deliberations about some fairly fundamental issues in family law - the functioning and structure of the Family Court, maintenance collection and enforcement, and matrimonial property - I know just how vital it is to have systematic, statistical information about trends and attitudes concerning marriage, the family and the Family Court itself.

The Family Law Act should be a dynamic, evolutionary piece of legislation, constantly scrutinised and adapted to ensure that it meets the needs of our heterogeneous community. Apart from my Departmental advisers - to whose diligence and enthusiasm the passage of the Family Law Amendment Bill owes a great deal - the Act provides for three key sets of participants in this process of scrutiny and adaptation: the Family Court itself (Judges and registrars), the Family Law Council and the Institute of Family Studies.

Each group has its own particular function, its own special expertise, and this makes it essential that the work of all three be properly integrated. The statutory charter of the Institute is, of course, wider than just studying the operation of family law and related legislation, being aimed at identifying and developing an understanding of "factors affecting marital and family stability in Australia" (s.114B(2)(a)). But as the Institute itself pointed out to me in a post-election briefing in March, its work in the family law area is central, relating as it does directly to its establishment under the Family Law Act.

The right balance must be struck between the independence of the Institute on the one hand and the need for integrated, policy-oriented effort on the other. It is important that the Institute, under the overall supervision of its Board of Management, be able to develop and pursue long-term research programs free from Government manipulation. That is a minimum requirement for the integrity of the research undertaken.

At the same time it is every bit as important that the planning and execution of the Institute's research work be sensitive to, and co-ordinated with, the needs of the Court, the Family Law Council and the Government. I

warmly endorse the Institute's own perception of its "important role in ensuring that advice provided to the Attorney-General by the Family Law Council is well informed by sound research data". Co-ordination sounds good in theory: the challenge is - and this is where renewed efforts may, I think, be necessary - to make it work in practice.

Apart from the contribution that this conference will make to encouraging dialogue and understanding between researchers and decision-makers, its particular value will lie in bringing home to decision-makers the changing nature of the family. We are constantly told, in terms of foreboding, about the vulnerable position in today's world of what is termed "the traditional family", and more particularly about the extent of marriage breakdown and the alleged influence of the introduction of "no-fault" divorce on this phenomenon.

It is important that legislators and policy makers be prepared to recognise that social structures and institutions, including the family, are not and never have been static or immutable. On the contrary, they evolve with changing social conditions and material developments. It is simply inevitable that the enormous technological, scientific and medical developments of recent decades should have significantly affected our social structures and, I venture to say, the values that underlie those structures.

I note with interest that family structures and values will occupy the remainder of your time here today. I only wish that a few of my fellow legislators and other decision-makers of this country could be present so that they might learn what is the true position (as opposed to some imagined picture, rooted more in myth or ideology

than in fact) in relation to family structures and values in Australia today.

On the ideological front I was somewhat heartened during the debate on the Family Law Amendment Bill in the House of Representatives when Mr John Spender, QC, the Member for North Sydney and not a renowned iconoclast, acknowledged that times have changed and with them our attitudes and values, in particular our attitudes and values in relation to marriage and the family unit.

In order to prove that the family is not a partisan issue, I will go so far as to quote him:

"It is said that the family has become a less stable unit. That is probably correct, but, of course, the causes for the family becoming a less stable unit are something else again. I do not think it is possible to chart precisely the development of the social map of Australia as revealed through what has happened in the family law courts over the past ten, fifteen or twenty years. But one is left with the impression, I think, that family law reflects the times and that the Family Law Act has not altered our social patterns but merely reflects changes in those patterns.

It has been reactive to social change and it is reactive to our times, which are more urgent, more questioning, more mobile and fluid and perhaps more self-centred and more neurotic than they used to be. This is a more complex age and, I think, a more selfish age and that is reflected in our attitudes to marriage and to the family unit. But however one might regret some of the changes, let us deal with society as it stands."

Specifically in relation to marriage breakdown, about which I heard much during the recent debate on the Family Law Amendment Bill, its prevalence in our society is obviously to be deplored. It is to be deplored because it means sadness and hardship for those involved, where they exist, and their children. The number of those involved, and of the children involved, continues to increase.

At the same time it should be better recognised, and publicly acknowledged, that often it is during the marriage that the greatest sadness and hardship is endured and that the termination of the marriage can bring great relief to one or both spouses and to their children. I am not here arguing in support of divorce, but rather that what we need to be doing is finding out why so many marriages do not work and what we can do to make them work.

Happily, at a conference such as this there would be little support for the simplistic view that the introduction of no-fault divorce law in this country explains the rate of marriage breakdown. Undoubtedly the Family Law Act in the early years of its operation did have an effect on the divorce figures, but this was simply a reflection, rather than a cause, of the level of marriage breakdowns and of the number of already broken-down marriages which could be brought to a satisfactory close under the no-fault system.

For the true causes of family instability we must, of course, look to the problems of unemployment and other economic issues and their effect on the family. We must also consider the impact of changing values and attitudes, in particular the influence on marriage of the women's movement. The fact that women are now demanding "a fair go" - and rightly so - must of course affect the marriage relationship and the traditional parenting roles.

All of these issues relate back in various ways to the role of government for which, in this area, I am responsible. I have the responsibility through my administration of the Family Law Act to ensure that when marriages break down the disputes which follow can be solved quickly, and with the minimum of bitterness and expense, and that the parties and their children are given all possible assistance to adjust to their new circumstances.

I also have responsibility - probably the ultimate responsibility, because it relates to funding - for marriage counselling in this country. The priorities here of course are to get to all couples in crisis, whatever their class or ethnic background, at an early stage and to get them to recognise that they need guidance.

Perhaps most important of all, I have responsibility for the Commonwealth funding of pre-marital education. This is obviously a vital area, and the present level of Commonwealth funding of \$80,000, although increased by \$30,000 this year, obviously needs to be further improved if this kind of education is to be available on a scale which is of real and practical value to the community.

Family Law: The Progress So Far

Within the first week or so of assuming office I was sent a document by Don Edgar the purpose of which was "to provide the incoming Attorney-General with the Institute of Family Studies' views on priorities concerning the broad area of families and family law". Given that the other contributors to this Conference are reporting to it on their work, it seems appropriate that I should also do so on mine.

Probably the most significant item contained in the Institute's briefing document to me was the Family Law Amendment Bill - now, I am happy to say, the Family Law Amendment Act 1983.

A Bill to make many long overdue changes to the Family Law Act had been before the Parliament for more than 18 months when I came to office: its lack of progress through the Parliament during that period was little short of scandalous, and it of course lapsed with the last Parliament. I introduced a new Bill in the first short sitting of the new Parliament and I was able - much to everyone's amazement, including my own - to have it passed by both Houses before the present Budget sittings were half-way through.

Its passage proves that family law is not a "Cinderella" issue for this Government, and that we meant what we said before the election when we gave a top priority to family law. It is not without significance for this Conference that the new amending Act, with its many important reforms, will come into operation on the final day of the Conference (25 November 1983).

Provisions in the new Act which are likely to be of most interest to this audience are those which:

- . give statutory recognition to the now almost universal practice of conciliation conferences in all Family Court proceedings concerning children and financial matters;
- . remove the reference to the age of 14 years in the provision concerning the wishes of children; this will mean that the wishes of a child of any age can be taken into account, to the extent appropriate, in

proceedings concerning the child's guardianship, custody or maintenance;

- . introduce a set of criteria in addition to the wishes of the child, as matters to be taken into account in guardianship, custody and access to decisions;
- . seek to make the presently available injunctions for the personal protection of parties to the marriage, or their children, more effective by attaching power of arrest orders to them.

I should also mention in relation to family violence that the Institute also asked me to fund a pilot project in Adelaide for a centre at which divorced couples whose relationship is acrimonious can hand over their children to each other for access, thus avoiding the possibility of incidents of violence. I was able to provide that funding and I look forward to hearing how the project is proceeding.

The Institute also urged me in its briefing paper to seek a referral to the Commonwealth of relevant State powers in family law matters, the primary objective here being to solve the jurisdictional issues that plague the administration of family law in this country.

We have attempted in the new Family Law Amendment Act to address these jurisdictional problems as far as possible, and to stretch the outer limits of Commonwealth power as far as possible. Some people may consider that we have gone too far, and that the High Court will find some of the proposed new jurisdiction of the Family Court beyond Commonwealth power: if they are disposed to challenge what the Commonwealth has done I simply hope they will do so at the earliest possible opportunity so that the

constitutional uncertainties of family law can be finally laid to rest.

There do, of course, remain areas of jurisdiction - particularly in relation to children - outside the scope even of the most adventurously amended Family Law Act, and consequently of the Family Court. I repeat the assurance that I have given previously: that I will continue to pursue all available options, in particular the reference of power, to solve these jurisdictional problems.

Another matter which the Institute placed high on its list was the inquiry into matrimonial property law, long promised by my immediate predecessor but not forthcoming under his regime. I am pleased to say that here, too, an election promise has been kept. As many of you will be aware, at the beginning of June I asked the Australian Law Reform Commission to conduct the matrimonial property inquiry. Professor Hambly, the Commissioner in charge of the inquiry, has now been at work on it for some months, though we will of course have to wait until almost the end of 1985 for his report.

I have no doubt that there will be few other tasks undertaken by lawyers in our time which will have such significance for the family as the work of this inquiry and its ultimate report. For reasons outlined earlier, I welcome the news that there are plans for the Institute to assist the inquiry in its work in collaboration with the Family Court.

A further matter which the Institute raised with me then, and subsequently, was the collection by the Family Court of information about its clients for the purpose of effective research by bodies such as the Institute. This is a matter that has, I understand, been the subject of long negotiation between the Court and the Institute. I

gather those negotiations are at last being drawn to a satisfactory conclusion and, in view of all I have said about the importance of the collection of accurate data about families and the Family Court, this cannot happen too soon.

I must not finish without mentioning the Centre for Continuing Education of the Australian National University which has collaborated with the Institute in arranging this Conference. In 1981, it sponsored the conference on Parenting after Separation in which alternative patterns of child care were discussed and, in 1980, a conference on Living Together at which various patterns of lifestyles and living arrangements were discussed. The published reports of these two conferences have become very valuable Australian source books for those who work with families.

This Conference is a landmark in the life of the Institute of Family Studies. I hope that it will also become a landmark for the wider Australian community. I wish you all well in your discussions and have much pleasure in declaring this Conference open.

The baby boom generation as reproducers: Fertility in Australia in the late 1970s and the 1980s

Peter McDonald
Institute of Family Studies

INTRODUCTION

During the 1970s, fertility in Australia, as in other industrialized nations has plummeted. The total fertility rate, for example, dropped from 2.95 births per woman in 1971 to 1.89 in 1980. In this paper, I shall not be documenting the demographic detail of this decline, (1) but shall instead focus upon explanations of the change using information obtained from the 1981-82 Institute of Family Studies Family Formation Survey. This survey was a nationally representative sample of more than 2500 men and women aged 18-34 years. The survey is particularly convenient because people in this age range have largely contributed to the decline in fertility. I have limited the analysis to women who were aged 25-34 at the time of the survey because these women have been in the forefront of the fertility decline. On the other hand, it is too early to draw firm conclusions on the fertility behaviour of women aged less than 25 at the time of the survey. Those aged 25-34 in 1981 are also the group born in the decade following the Second World War, the baby-boom generation. They are therefore of interest because some theories of the behaviour of this generation revolve around the size of the group in comparison with previous generations (Easterlin, 1980). For example, in Australia, the number of births in this generation (birth years July 1946 to June 1956) was 43 per cent higher than the number of births in the preceding decade.

An Historical Perspective to Fertility Decline

To avoid the frequently observed error of placing contemporary social change in the setting of a

romanticized past, it is useful to consider the directions in which the currents of social change and fertility have been flowing in the past century. As is well known, fertility declined from high, 'natural' levels to relatively low levels in the sixty year period following 1870 in most Western, industrialized nations. Theories regarding the causes of this decline have been numerous and diverse and there is little agreement about the relative importance of the several factors that have been mentioned. As recent as 1982, it has been possible for a quite obscure explanation, the constricting effect of tightlacing, to be put forward and given some degree of credibility (Davies, 1982). More popularly, however, explanations revolve around a spectrum of changes in social and familial organization. The main components of the spectrum are as follows:

(i) the role of children in families. With emphasis on eugenics and evolution, the quality of children attained prominence over the quantity. Mass education was promoted and children became a cost rather than a source of income (Burguiere 1976; Aries 1980; Caldwell 1982). Intergenerational social mobility was a growing possibility and parents began to be judged on their success in the social mobility stakes. Much of the burden for achieving this end was placed upon the mother and the home environment that she provided for her children (Lasch, 1977). Hence, for married women, the motherhood role was pre-eminent.

(ii) medical concern for the health of mothers and children. If mothers were to improve the quality of their children, it was important that the children be not too close to each other in age and that child-bearing at older ages should be curtailed. The

risk of both maternal and child mortality was associated with narrow spacing and child bearing at older ages.

(iii) social mobility and the rise of the middle class also put emphasis on economic considerations. If a man was able to establish himself in a job before marrying and if his wife had had time to develop household skills before she married, then they would be well prepared to provide the right kind of environment for their children (Banks, 1954; Aries, 1972). Over-frequent child-bearing would however, endanger, their economic situation. As these considerations were more salient the more the family was tied into the ethic of improving their situation, class differences in fertility levels prevailed.

(iv) the changing status of women. The previous three explanations revolve around the notion of a family striving to improve their lot for the advancement of their children. As such, the mother is seen as playing a subservient role as the creator of the home environment from which her husband and children will draw sustenance for the struggle outside the family. On the contrary, it has been argued that the decline in fertility was achieved through women asserting themselves to the point where they made their own, or at least joint, decisions about childbearing in order to ease their household burden and to lower the risk of early death. (Branca, 1975) There is little evidence however, that married women were asserting themselves so that they could pursue roles alternative to that of housewife and mother. In fact, the idea of scientific

homemaking and motherhood seemed to develop impetus during the fertility decline (Lasch, 1977; Deacon, 1983; Reiger, 1983).

Thus it seems, somewhat ironically, that fertility declined so that women could better pursue motherhood as a career. Alternative careers for women existed, but with only rare exceptions, these were pursued outside marriage. And many women did not marry. For example, at the time of the 1921 Census of Australia, 17 per cent of women aged 45-49 had never married.

The progress of the Australian fertility decline is shown in Table 1 together with changes in the proportions never marrying and never having a child during their lifetime. (2)

INSERT TABLE 1 in here

The causation of fertility decline described above applies broadly to the drop in the number of births to married women from an average of over six births for women born in the middle of the nineteenth century to just over three births for those born in the last years of the nineteenth century. Certain major events such as the depressions of the 1890s and 1930s and the First World War no doubt also played a part in keeping the fertility decline going, but more as readily observable demonstrations of the prudence of fertility control. The 1890s depression was, however, largely responsible for the peaking in the proportion of women who never married (years of birth 1866-76), while the 1930s depression contributed to the trough in the number of births to women born in the first decade of this century.

The Post-War Baby Boom and Its Causes

The next remarkable feature of Table 1 is the experience of women born in the years 1918 to 1943. Their marriage and fertility experience is concentrated in the 25 year period following the Second World War. During these years, the lifetime fertility of married women increased while the proportion who never married fell to very low levels. Less than 10 per cent of all women did not have a child, compared to more than 20 per cent for women born from 1850 to 1910. A frequently heard, romanticized view of the past is that 'traditionally' almost all Australian women married and had children. In fact, this tradition applies only to the 1950s and 1960s. Not shown in Table 1 is the remarkable shift to much younger ages at marriage and the rising incidence of premarital pregnancies that also occurred during the 1950s and 1960s. (3) The stage setting for the present fertility decline therefore needs also to include a consideration of the causes of this heyday of the 'traditional' nuclear family.

The most commonly held view is that during the 1950s and 1960s, the role of motherhood was promoted as it never had been before. Labour force participation of women with children was heavily discouraged. The ideal for a woman was the 'happy housewife heroine' (Friedan, 1963). The argument continues that this trend was a form of cleansing from the previous 20 years of depression and war, a return to the purest and most basic values. Friedan portrayed this trend as a new phenomenon, but it could also be seen merely as a continuation of the reign of the child-king (Aries, 1980) which had been responsible for the long-term decline in fertility. Perhaps there was a need in the 1950s and 1960s to

promote the motherhood role because so many women found themselves in that role and some may have begun to have doubts. Education levels of women had been slowly rising as had the level of work-force participation of married women, stimulated, no doubt, by the need for married women to work during the war. In 1954, about 15 per cent of married women in the main childbearing ages were in the work force and the percentage continued to rise throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

My own view is that the increased fertility in the 1950s and 1960s can be explained almost entirely by the changed pattern of marriage and its determinants. Certainly the average fertility across all women in the society was higher because a considerably higher proportion married but even the moderately higher levels of fertility for married women were probably due mainly to the very much earlier commencement of childbearing, in turn due to early marriage. Fifty per cent of all women had had a birth at age 23 or younger.

The shift to a much earlier age at marriage can be seen as a part of a sexual revolution among youth which received a major impetus during the war. There was a strong desire for early sexual experience and changing social norms provided greater freedom for youth. Some were only able to attain this goal through early marriage while others achieved early marriage through having had the sexual experience first. Attitudes were somewhat carefree and many couples found themselves with two children almost before they knew it. In the back of their minds however, was the knowledge that fertility could be controlled. In the 1960s, increasing affluence and later, improved methods of contraception assisted in prolonging the pattern (McDonald, 1982;

Carmichael 1983; Caldwell, forthcoming).

This then was the stage set for the entry into the reproductive ages of the early post-war baby boom generation. They were to break the pattern of which they were the first products. The projections shown in Table 1 indicate that those born in the years 1946-56 have begun a move towards remaining never married and towards having no children.

Present Fertility Decline: Theoretical Considerations

In broad terms, there are two distinct explanations for the recent fertility decline, one short-term, the other long-term. The short-term explanation revolves around special conditions applying during the 1970s and 1980s which, it is argued, have depressed fertility below its longer-term level. The argument is expressed primarily in economic terms, that recession, unemployment, insecurity, and inflation of housing costs have provided an obstacle to the setting up of new families. A more sophisticated economic explanation, again short-term in nature, is that the post-war, baby-boom generation have, throughout their lives, faced relative deprivation and fierce competition, relative that is to the preceding generations born in the 1930s and early 1940s. This has led them, according to Easterlin (1980) to reduce their fertility. Proponents of these short-term economic arguments point to the decline in fertility which occurred in the 1930s and the subsequent rise to argue that an improvement in economic circumstances will be accompanied by the return of marriage and child-bearing to 'normal' levels. Some go on to predict a 1990s baby-boom (reported in Westoff, 1983).

The alternative, long-term argument is not as precisely expressed but it amounts to saying that there have been fundamental changes in sex roles and in the roles of parents which will not be easily reversed. At its most basic level, the argument is simply that the age of motherhood as a woman's most important, all consuming role has come to an end. In the terms of Philippe Aries (1980), 'the days of the child-king are over. The under 40 generation is leading us into a new epoch, one in which the child occupies a smaller place, to say the least'. The child is no longer the essential variable, but merely 'one of the various components that make it possible for adults to blossom as individuals'. That is to say until recently women had blossomed through the light shed upon them by their husband and children, or more particularly their sons. Now there are many sources of light. More women, therefore, have opted to remain childless or to reduce the number of children that they have. Further there has been a marked shift towards refusal to have an undesired child and the means of achieving this end, contraception, abortion and sterilization, have accordingly been provided. Proponents of this argument claim that the change is long-term in nature and that a return to the fertility levels of the 1950s and 1960s is remote.

In putting forward this dichotomy of possible explanations of fertility decline, more particularist explanations such as the impact of contraception and abortion, the women's movement, the rise of individualism, and various dimensions of the economic situation have been subsumed into either one of the broader explanations. Recent reviews of these explanations include Westoff (1983), Aries (1980) and Caldwell (forthcoming).

Besides the short and long-term differences, the two arguments differ fundamentally in how they view the interaction of individuals with their environment. The short-term or economic argument sees women, and couples for that matter, largely as passive participants in changes which are beyond their sphere of control. On the other hand, the long-term or social structural argument has women playing a very active part in changing the nature of their environment. In the historical preamble to this paper, I have argued that there is little evidence to suggest that the nineteenth century fertility decline had very much to do with married women seeking roles other than motherhood. The remainder of this paper addresses the question as to whether the present generation of young women are different in this regard or whether in fact they are merely reacting to short-term economic trends.

Characteristics of the Baby-boom Generation

It is apparent from the previous discussion that theories about the current decline in fertility revolve around differences in experience or attitudes of the baby-boom generation, that is, those born in the years 1946-56. In this section I shall describe some measurable differences between those born in the years 1946-56 compared with those born in the preceding decade. The data are obtained largely from the 1971 and 1981 Censuses of Australia. We must keep in mind, however, that the nineteenth century decline in fertility, the low fertility of the generations born between 1900 and 1915, the boom fertility of the 1950s and 1960s, and the present decline in fertility have all occurred almost simultaneously in English-speaking industrialized countries and in many other Western

countries as well. This implies, of course, that purely Australian explanations of changing fertility behaviour would be inadequate and that characteristic differences across generations are more likely to be relevant to explanations of fertility trends if those differences are replicated in several countries at about the same time.

As mentioned above the baby-boom generation warrants its title if the number of births in the decade 1936-46 is compared with the number in the years 1946-56. The number of births in the latter decade was 43 per cent higher. By 1981, however, because there has been proportionately more in-migration to the 1936-46 birth cohort, the excess of the post-war birth cohort had been reduced to 35 per cent. The numerical difference between women aged 25-34 and 35-44 in 1981 was 303 thousand of which 267 thousand or 88 per cent were Australian-born. Thus, although purely Australian explanations of change must rate rather lowly, it is interesting to note that the baby-boom generation is more specifically Australian-born than its predecessor. A further important point relating to absolute numbers is that the boom is only a boom when compared to preceding generations. That is while the population aged 25-34 in 1981 is considerably larger than that aged 35-44, the numbers in age groups 5-14 and 15-24 are slightly larger than the 25-34 year old cohort. Economic arguments of the Easterlin type are based not on absolute numbers but on the relative sizes of successive generations. This is why it is argued by proponents of this theory that those aged 25-34 in 1981 will have low fertility but that persons younger than them will return to having a 'more normal' childbearing pattern. (4)

Changes in sex roles should be reflected in statistics of education and labour force participation levels for women. At the lower end of the scale, 62 per cent of 35-44 year old women (1981) had left school at age 15 or less compared with 42 per cent of 25-34 year olds. The baby-boom generation, therefore, experienced a marked upward shift in education levels. The percentage with a degree or diploma was also almost the same for men and women in the baby-boom group. The changes in proportions mask a quite massive growth in the numbers of women who were highly qualified. The number with a degree in 1981 increases from 29 thousand for 35-44 year olds to 72 thousand for 25-34 year olds. When dealing with social change numerical growth of persons in a particular category may well be just as significant if not more so, than proportional change.(5) As an indicator of the significance of education, in 1981, 30 per cent of women aged 25-34 with a degree had never married, compared to 20 per cent for women with other qualifications and 11 per cent for those with no qualifications.

Changes in rates of labour force participation were also very great during the 1970s as indicated below:

Labour force participation rates (per cent), Women aged 25-34

	1971 Census	1981 Census
All women	39	54
Married women	33	49

Furthermore the main occupational growth area for women was in the professional and technical categories where

the number of 25-34 year old women employed jumped from 56 thousand in 1971 to 137 thousand in 1981. Not unexpectedly, these shifts in labour force participation of women were accompanied by major changes in sex role attitudes. (6)

Thus, while women born in the years 1946-56 were not innovators in the areas of education and labour force participation, they were the group for which innovation was rapidly transformed into majority behaviour. A majority left school at age 16 or above and a majority are in the labour force, even among married women. Many of the major changes which have had such a great bearing on their lives were largely instigated by previous generations. Besides education and labour force changes, we could also include in this statement the womens movement, availability of abortion and sterilization, contraception for single women, a degree of acceptability of sexual experience for women prior to marriage and of living together arrangements and perhaps most crucially, a greater freedom to make choices about alternative life paths. This is not to say that greater freedom has brought all joy and no sorrow. In fact, the Institute's survey of young adults indicates a degree of confusion, inconsistency and ambivalence about these choices both for men and women. The point I wish to make is merely that the baby-boom generation, those born in the years 1946-56, were the first to experience these choices on a wide scale.

The data I have just presented are clearly in support of the theory that recent fertility decline is associated more with social structural change than with short-term economic trends. It could be argued to the contrary that many of the observed changes, the apparent choices

that women have made, were in fact forced by the economic necessity for women to remain in the labour force and to delay childbearing. The two most pertinent economic factors are the increased cost of housing in the 1970s and the difficulty of re-entering the labour force. A recently commissioned Institute of Family Studies monograph shows that couples whose joint incomes amount to one and a half times the average male weekly earnings can obtain a housing mortgage with relative ease, but this is almost impossible for the couple with one income equal to average weekly earnings (Burke et al, forthcoming). The authors also show how this situation has emerged very rapidly during the 1970s. Not only is it necessary to have two incomes to obtain the mortgage, it is also necessary to maintain those two incomes to meet the repayments. As full-time child-care is expensive and often unacceptable, young couples frequently find that their choices are very restricted, far from the image of free choice portrayed in the social structural argument above.

Thus this review of the life experiences of the baby-boom generation provides evidence for both theories of fertility decline. It remains to examine the behaviour and attitudes of the players themselves. In the following section, I shall examine group differences in the delay of childbearing in an attempt to identify which sub-groups are contributing most to the fertility decline. Following that, I shall turn to the expressed attitudes and opinions of the baby-boom generation.

Group Differences in Childlessness

Among 25-34 year old women, the best single indicator of their fertility behaviour is whether or not they have

had a child. Ryder (1980) has also shown that the rate of birth of the first child has been the principal demographic influence on fluctuations of overall fertility in recent times in the United States. It has also been shown that correlates of low fertility also correlate with high levels of childlessness (see, for example, Veevers, 1979).

In the Institute's 1981/82 Family Formation Survey, 26 per cent of 25-34 year old women had never given birth. Only 4 per cent of these childless women indicated that they or their partner were unable to have children for medical reasons. The 26 per cent childless divided into 12 per cent who were married and 14 per cent who were not currently married (12 per cent never married and 2 per cent divorced widowed and separated). One in six women who had ever married had not had a birth. Marital breakdown appeared not to be a cause of childlessness as 86 per cent of those whose first marriage had ended had had at least one child. Two per cent of the total group or 18 per cent of those who had never married were women who had had a child but had never married. This then is a broad description of childlessness among the sampled 25-34 year old women. It should be noted that the proportion childless corresponded closely to observed levels in the 1981 Census and in the cumulation of registered first births for women born in the years 1946-56.

Of course, childlessness at ages 25-34 can reflect delay of the first birth, a decision never to have a birth or, more importantly an element of uncertainty about whether the woman will ever have a birth. Seventy per cent of those with no children said that they would like to have children of their own at some time. This means that 92

per cent of 25-34 year old women either already had had a birth or said that they thought they would like to have children at some time. Comparison with Table 1 shows that this figure is similar to the highest levels recorded in Australian history, that is, for those born in the years 1933-43. The projections of ultimate childlessness for women born in the years 1946-56 also shown in Table 1 suggest strongly, however, that a very large proportion of those presently childless will remain so despite their expressed likes.

The overall completed family size desired (present number plus additional would like to have) of 25-34 year old women was as follows:

Number of children	%
0	8
1	7
2	46
3	27
4+	<u>12</u>
	100

Mean = 2.33 children

The heavy normative concentration on two or three children is quite evident, but as already suggested reality is likely to fall short of these norms. Another important point is that fully 60 per cent of these relatively young women said that they did not want any or any more children. The likely demand for roles other than childbearing among these women at sometime in the future is obvious.

Group differences in childlessness among 25-34 year old

women are likely to be helpful in moving closer to an understanding of the present fertility decline. That is, if we know which women are more likely to be delaying births, we gain an indication of the factors influencing lower fertility. These group differences are shown for 20 selected characteristics in Table 2. The middle column of figures shows the percentage of all women in the group who were childless. The first and third columns are shown to indicate, albeit very roughly, whether childlessness for the group was due to delay of marriage or to delay of births within marriage.

INSERT TABLE 2 in here

In terms of parental background, the class factor is very evidently related to childlessness. Women whose fathers had tertiary education or were in white collar occupations were much more likely to be childless. At the other end of the scale, those whose mothers had been blue collar workers were much more likely to have had a child. These class differences were related to both delay of marriage and delay of children within marriage. While not conclusive, these results are strongly supportive of births being voluntarily delayed in the pursuit of alternate roles rather than being delayed because of economic difficulty. The argument would be that educated, high status parents would have had both the resources and the motivation to provide the basis for choices by their daughters, while working class daughters would have had fewer options. The counter argument would be that working class girls would have had lower aspirations in respect of housing and were therefore less inclined to delay childbearing in order to save for a house. The former argument seems more likely at this stage, but we shall return to this point

when attitudes are examined in the next section.

The cogency of the argument that parental resources provided more options for daughters is supported further by data on the education level and early experience of women. Those who reached the final years of school, continued their education after school, or attended private schools or single-sex schools were much more likely to be childless, again both because of delayed marriage and childlessness within marriage. Further those who were living in major cities or left home at later ages were more likely to be childless. Conversely those who left home early, who started into serious relationships at a young age, those with four or less years of secondary education and those who had no post-school training were much more likely to have had a child. Again the strong image obtained is that girls who did not have the resources at home had left school and home early and started into serious relationships and childbearing sooner than those who had more choices.

Not unexpectedly, work force characteristics and income are very highly related to childlessness. Clearly a woman with children is much less likely to be in the full-time work force and much more likely to have no earned income. However, when we look at the job in the first years after leaving school, it is very clear that those who were in blue collar jobs are much more likely to have now had a child. Similarly, among those presently working, professional and clerical women were much more likely to be childless than women in other jobs. An interesting one is the association between childlessness and the number of jobs since leaving school. Both those with no changes and those with numerous changes were more likely to be childless.

Perhaps these reflect two strategies of career path.

These data on work force and income also, of course, provide strong support for the argument that women have continued working in order to obtain sufficient income to buy a house. Among women with partners, the mean combined income level of the couple was \$19,300 among women with children and \$28,800 among those without children. On the other hand, those whose partner was in a white collar job were much more likely to be childless than those whose partner was a blue collar worker.

Finally childlessness was more common among those who themselves and whose mothers did not often attend religious services. The differences by religious observance and religion (not shown) are however not as large as other differences already discussed.

In summary we could say that while there is an obvious association between childlessness, work force participation and income earning for women, the group differences show that this association was found much more frequently among those who themselves and whose parents were well educated and were working in higher status jobs. Whilst materialist motivations were no doubt involved perhaps even underpinning behaviour, the suggestion is that the pursuance of roles other than motherhood, supported by the resources derived from parental background, was a more important determinant of childlessness than economic difficulty. In the next section, this question is pursued further using the expressed attitudes of the surveyed respondents.

Childlessness and Attitudes of Respondents

All respondents were asked whether they did (or would) delay having children for a selection of reasons. The results are shown for 25-34 year-old women in Table 3. In general, the differences between those who had had children and the childless reflect experience, that is, the childless were more likely to agree that they had delayed childbearing for every one of the eight reasons shown. Interestingly the smallest differences between those with children and those without and two of the lowest levels of agreement overall were for the two points most in discussion in this paper. Specifically, delaying births until the woman had a steady job or until the couple had a house were both rated low and did not discriminate strongly between the childless and those with children. On the other hand, having enough money, the husband having a steady job and psychological reasons such as ability to cope and feeling that the marriage was established were all much more strongly stated reasons for the delay of childbearing among childless women.

TABLE 3 in here

In Table 3 then, the economic factors seem to be more prominent than the alternate role factor (woman having a steady job). Also, among the 8 per cent of all women who wished to remain childless, only one woman said in an open-ended response that she did not want to have children because it would interfere with her career. Many others stated however, that a child would restrict their freedom or that they did not have the sense of responsibility necessary to raise a child. The most frequently stated reason for wishing to remain childless

however, was simply that the respondent disliked children.

Table 4 indicates the results of a question asking whether the respondent felt (feels) pressure to have a child from various people. Two points are clear, first, that pressure from self was the strongest influence and second, that pressure from the male partner was of least significance. Although only a third of childless women said that they were under pressure from their parents to have a child, most said that their parents would be very pleased if they did have a child. Parents are evidently making their feelings known without threatening the independence of the younger generation. The important point, however, is that women more often feel pressure from themselves and that spouses do not appear to be exerting strong pressure.

TABLE 4 in here

While many people may be involved in decision making about births, women apparently see themselves as the principal decision maker. When asked in an open-ended response question, why they did have children, only three persons (men and women) with children mentioned pressure from parents and only 4 per cent mentioned pressure from their partner. Not unexpectedly, the most frequently mentioned set of reasons was that it was natural to have children, that children and marriage went together or simply that they liked children. The next most common set of responses, despite the control over fertility that this generation has had, was that the children were unplanned, that they just happened. Finally there was a fairly sizeable group (13 per cent of all respondents who had had children) who mentioned

more narcissistic reasons, that they wanted to create their own family, to take on the role of a parent. Some typical responses were:

"Because I have always loved children and wanted my own. They make a complete marriage. It's good to see them grow and help them with their problems".

"The first one was a mistake and the second time to have a brother or sister for the older one."

"To have something to love. Not a very good reason is it. I've always wanted them since I was 14. I just did it for someone to love and fill a little gap in my life."

"Cause I wanted one to make up for the way my marriage was going.. I wasn't getting anything out of it so have a child."

While pursuance of alternate roles has not yet emerged strongly as a cause of childlessness from these attitudinal data, there is an argument that such attitudes may only emerge clearly in intensive interviews. In fact, a set of intensive interviews of married couples in Melbourne, a sub-set of the larger, national study was carried out and the issue of children was addressed. These were long, semi-structured interviews in which the interviewer was able to gain the confidence of the respondent and also to obtain an overall picture of their lives. Among the childless couples in this study, the importance of alternate roles emerges clearly. The picture obtained is not so much of people rejecting children but rather considering them as an option which it would be nice to fit into their life plan if possible. The following quotations from women are illustrative:

"The older I get the more, oh I don't know, I suppose the more you think about it because you know that eventually it's going to be yea or nay, but at the moment it's not bothering me, I

don't seem to have time anyway, I guess you'd make time and that's it, but I'm not really prepared to make time at the moment."

"Now with my long service due next year it seems silly not to hang out until then."

"Well each year we have said next year ... but I would like to think I would get another years teaching in before I take maternity leave or something. Only because it (her job) is a really fulfilling thing for me ... so I want to get that one more year in."

"In the beginning of our marriage, he wanted to have a child straight away, but I wasn't ready, and last year I was talking about it, he wasn't ready."

"Well it depends on when I finish my Masters. It would be really good if I was pregnant when I submitted my thesis. So that I could maybe just work on for a little while, a few months afterwards, in the office I'm in now."

Husbands in these intensive interviews were more likely to mention economic factors, but they also displayed a fair degree of indecisiveness, as if, as argued above, the decision about children was more their wives than their own:

"This is all in the sort of grey area, once the house is organized, the trip is over and once we're sort of, well once we've decided to take deep plunges into sort of very hot water, I don't know ... It's coming to a head, it can't be put off forever in the next couple of years or whatever, I don't know, I don't know where it's going to at this stage."

"When is purely when the house is ready to have them, and when we can look after them financially ... Kate comes up for long service leave in three years, which would make me about 30, and it is worth a little bit more money to us. We have been discussing it lately, I must say we did plan to wait that long, I don't know whether we will, I hope we can have children."

"Helen is starting to think she would like to start a family, I am thinking crumbs, I am too

old, so I try and avoid it ... As life goes on you think, oh why the disruption, so it's just sort of going along, not achieving anything."

"We'd like to enjoy our life without children at the moment. Go on holidays without children at the moment. Get established without children. Have two incomes. That sort of thing. Then in X number of years, have the kiddies."

Thus people usually do not make clear statements that they never want to have children but it is evident that many will drift into permanent childlessness. There still seems to be a strong feeling against childbearing above age 35 or so and this point creeps up on people. This is why the ultimate level of childlessness will be higher than the 8 per cent level estimated on the basis of the expressed likes of the survey respondents.

TABLE 5 in here

A final approach to the analysis is to consider more general attitudes in relation to whether respondents have children or not. This is done in Table 5 for 13 questions relating to marriage, motherhood, and sex roles. Of interest are both the overall levels of agreement and the differences between those with children and those without. (7) It is evident that women with children express more 'traditional' attitudes on all of these items, but even they have relatively low levels of agreement on items such as 'important decisions should be made by the husband' and 'a woman is only really fulfilled when she becomes a mother' and a high level of agreement that 'people can have a satisfying relationship without children'. Childless women whether married or not express views in favour of work for women and more egalitarian marriages. Although couples without children have fewer household responsibilities, childless women almost universally

agree that 'husbands should help regularly with the housework' and equally as universally disagree that husbands should make the important decisions. The impression gained is that it is not marriage but motherhood which brings a change in roles for women, a shift to a less egalitarian situation. Recognition of this fact may be at the heart of the quite remarkable loss of mystique that motherhood has undergone in the 1970s. Glezer (1983) shows for example that the question, a woman is only really fulfilled when she becomes a mother, received 68 per cent agreement in 1971 but only 30 per cent agreement in 1981 among young married women (aged 18-34). Between 1975 and 1981, agreement of young women with the proposition, people can have a satisfying relationship without children, jumped from 66 per cent to 87 per cent.

It is important to remember, however, that these general attitudes do not imply that the respondent herself would follow the behaviour pattern examined in the question. That is, although 87 per cent of young women may agree that people can have a satisfying relationship without children, this is a long way from saying that 87 per cent of the respondents would say that they themselves could have a satisfying relationship without children. Thus many general attitudinal questions reflect more an increased level of tolerance of alternative behaviour but not to the same extent an increased incidence of alternative behaviour. As pointed out earlier most childless women aged 25-34 said that they themselves would like a child at some time and as shown by the intensive interviews many couples in fact are indecisive and ambivalent about future childbearing.

At the end of the survey questionnaire, the respondent was asked two questions about how he or she saw life at

this stage. They were asked: 'What do you think is the major pressure you face in your life at this stage' and 'How do you see yourself in two years time. What will life be like for you then.' Overwhelmingly in comparison to other classes of response, economic problems (money, debts, and the cost of living) were the major pressure felt by both men and women aged 25 and over. Also quite striking, however, was that men mentioned work and career problems far more frequently than women while women mentioned children or parenting much more frequently than men. These were the responses relating to major pressure at the time of the interview. In response to the question about how the respondents saw themselves in two years time, work related responses were mentioned to almost the same extent by women as by men. But again, the male responses were more career-path oriented whereas the female responses were more in terms of leaving or re-entering the labour force. Thus these broadest of all attitudes seem to more strongly support the notion that immediate economic problems weigh heavily on the decision-making of young couples.

CONCLUSION

Like the fight between good and evil in an Asian classical drama, the weight of the argument in this paper has swung one way and then the other, and again in the same tradition, the paper ends without a clear resolution of the issue. In fact, the evidence is strong that both the economic problems of the 1970s and the growth of new roles for women have contributed to the decline in fertility. This may simply reduce to saying that women work for three reasons: to gain income for their household, for the satisfaction of the work/career involvement, and to have a degree of

economic independence. Both the state of the economy and changes in sex roles may shift the balance of importance between these reasons as will the family life cycle stage. This suggests that should the economic situation make a startling recovery and return to the situation of the mid 1960s, women who are working primarily to gain income for their family may withdraw with a consequent impact on their fertility behaviour. But if they should do so, given that there would still be very many two-income families among their friends, relatives and neighbours, their standard of living in this consumer-oriented society would be relatively reduced. The pressure to remain in the work-force is therefore likely to be strong even for those for whom income for their family is the chief motivation (now often a necessity). The more that women work, the more that the society's structures will be geared to women working. This means that the efforts to combine childrearing and work roles will continue. Low fertility is therefore unlikely to be merely a specific characteristic of the baby-boom generation, a short-term phenomenon. Instead it has heralded a longer-term pattern under which 20 per cent or more of women will not have a birth and only a small proportion will have three or more children. In fact, it seems more likely that a return of better economic conditions will be accompanied by even greater levels of work force participation of women since the work/career ethic has been well and truly imbued in the younger generation of women. The torment of balancing jobs and family life is therefore an issue which individual couples and the society in general must face realistically.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) This detail can be found in the paper, 'The early stages of the family life cycle in Australia: Demographic changes since the 1960s', presented in this Conference by Lado Ruzicka.
- (2) This table is preliminary in nature as it is based on many assumptions and occasionally a degree of educated guesswork. The notes to the table explain the difficulties. Overall, however, the picture presented by the table is likely to be broadly reliable.
- (3) These trends are described by Gordon Carmichael in his paper at this Conference entitled, 'The transition to marriage: Trends in age at first marriage and proportions marrying in Australia'.
- (4) In fact, early statistics indicate that those younger than 25 in 1981 are delaying both their marriages and their births to an even greater extent. See the papers by Lado Ruzicka and Gordon Carmichael.
- (5) This is an argument on social change akin to Easterlin's economic change arguments, that is a jump in the relative number of people engaged in some activity may be a stimulus to changes in the proportion engaged in that activity. This is because markets are attuned to numbers rather than to proportions.

- (6) See the paper in this Conference by Helen Glazer.
- (7) A much more comprehensive analysis of these attitudes is provided in the paper by Helen Glazer in this Conference.

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**TABLE 1: GENERATIONS OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN BORN FROM
1841 to 1956: LIFETIME AVERAGE NUMBER OF BIRTHS TO
MARRIED WOMEN, LIFETIME PERCENTAGE NEVER MARRYING,
AND LIFETIME PERCENTAGE CHILDLESS**

Generation: Years of birth of women	Lifetime average number of live births to married women			Lifetime Percentage Never Marrying D	Lifetime Percentage Childless (all women) E
	A	B	C		
1841-46	6.8			7	14
1846-51	6.5			8	15
1851-56	6.3			10	17
1856-61	5.7			12	19
1861-66	5.1			14	21
1866-71	4.6			16	23
1871-76	4.2	4.2		17	25
1877-82		3.8		15	(23)
1882-87		3.6		14	(22)
1887-92		3.3		14	(22)
1892-97		3.0	3.1	13	(22)
1898-03			2.8	13	(22)
1903-1908			2.6	10	(20)
1908-13			2.6	9	19
1913-18			2.7	7	15
1918-23			2.9	6	13
1923-28			3.1	5	11
1928-33			3.2	5	10
1933-38			3.2	4	8
1938-43			2.9	4	8
1943-48			2.6	5	10
1946-51			2.4	7	15
1951-56			2.4	11	20

SOURCES AND NOTES TO TABLE 1

- A. Average number of children born to all marriages derived from all married women surviving at the time of the 1921 Census of Australia (Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1977, p.153)
- B. Average number of children born to existing marriage only (Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1977, p.153)
- C. Total fertility rate divided by the proportion of the generation who ever married during their lifetime. Proportions ever married derived from column D of the table. Total fertility rates for birth years 1893 to 1913 from Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1977, p.158. Total fertility rates for birth years 1913 to 1953 from Ruzicka and Choi (1981, p.114). Total fertility rates for birth years 1954 to 1956 based on my own estimate.
- D. Derived from Census data on proportions never married among women aged 45-49 or above for all generations born before 1938. Age group 45-49 is used as first choice if the data are available. For generations born before 1861, higher age groups are used according to the age of the generation at the time of the 1911 Census. For those born from 1938 onwards, estimates have been made on the basis of experience to 1982.
- E. Generations 1841 to 1876 from Appendix A, Volume 1, Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1911, p.326. Generations 1908 to 1943 from the micro-fiche tables of the 1981 Census. For this

latter set of data, it has been assumed that issue not stated should be distributed on a pro-rata basis. For generations from 1943 onwards, the values shown are my rough estimates on the basis of fertility experience to 1982. Generations born from 1877 to 1908 present a problem as the data on children in the Censuses which cover these generations refer to only children of the existing marriage. Further the extent of not stated issue varies greatly from census to census. The best that I could do was to make plausible estimates based on the available fertility data, particularly the 1954 Census, and the proportions who never married. These estimates are enclosed in brackets to indicate their low level of reliability.

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGES OF WOMEN AGED 25-34 WHO WERE NEVER MARRIED, CHILDLESS AND CHILDLESS HAVING MARRIED BY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOMEN, 1981/82

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOMEN	%	PERCENTAGE NEVER MARRIED	PERCENTAGE CHILDLESS	
			ALL WOMEN	EVER MARRIED WOMEN
TOTAL SAMPLE	100	14	26	16
PARENTAL BACKGROUND				
Mother's Religious Observance:				
Not at all or once or twice per year	40	19	29	17
Three or more times per year	59	10	24	17
Father's Post-school Education:				
Tertiary	12	25	42	27
None or trade qualifications	88	12	23	15
Father's Occupation When Respondent Growing Up:				
Blue Collar	58	11	21	14
White Collar	38	17	33	21
Mother's Occupation When Respondent Growing Up:				
Blue Collar	24	8	19	14
White Collar	17	15	29	18
Home duties	59	15	27	17
Mother's Paid Work While Respondent a Child:				
All or most of those years	20	12	24	15
Some of those years	18	18	33	20
Occasionally	14	11	19	13
Never	46	13	26	17
EDUCATION AND EARLY EXPERIENCE				
Population Size When R. was 15 Years:				
Major city	54	16	30	21
Large town	27	11	21	13
Other	19	11	19	9
Age Respondent First Left Home:				
Less than 18	25	12	19	12
18-19	31	11	21	13
20 and over	39	14	31	22
Main Relationship Activity When Respondent 15-17 Years:				
Family, friends of same sex, did not go out much	34	15	30	19
Went out in mixed groups	35	14	25	15
Casual dates	15	15	26	16
Serious relationship(s)	17	7	18	15

TABLE 2 Cont'd

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOMEN	%	PERCENTAGE NEVER MARRIED	PERCENTAGE CHILDLESS ALL WOMEN	EVER MARRIED WOMEN
Sex Life Pattern When Respondent was 15-17 Years:				
No sexual relations	70	13	25	16
Had sexual relations	24	13	26	19
Highest Level of Schooling of Respondent:				
Less than 4 years of secondary school	26	9	13	9
Four years of secondary school	30	9	18	13
5-6 years of secondary school	44	20	39	24
Type of School R. Attended:				
Government	73	14	26	16
Catholic	17	8	23	17
Private	10	22	33	20
Sex Mix of Last School R. Attended:				
Coeducational	63	13	22	14
Single sex	36	14	31	22
Respondent's Further Education:				
None	57	11	17	10
Trade, technical	17	10	31	24
Diploma	14	19	36	21
Degree	11	27	51	34
WORKFORCE, INCOME				
Type of Job in First Years After School:				
Student	7	21	44	31
Blue Collar	19	13	18	10
White Collar	72	13	27	17
Number of Jobs Since Leaving School:				
No changes	15	11	35	27
One change	11	7	17	11
2-5 changes	56	13	22	13
6 or more changes	18	20	34	22
Activity in Last Couple of Years:				
Worked full time	44	23	50	36
Worked part time	21	9	8	3
Home duties	32	3	4	3
Respondent's Occupation:				
Professional and administrative	18	28	55	38
Clerical	15	23	52	37
Other job	35	17	25	16
Home duties	46	3	5	5

TABLE 2 Cont'd

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOMEN	%	PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE CHILDLESS	
		NEVER MARRIED	ALL WOMEN	EVER MARRIED WOMEN
Income Group of Respondent:				
No earned income	37	3	5	4
Up to \$10,000	37	16	22	12
\$10,001 or more	27	25	58	46
OTHER CHARACTERISTICS				
Respondent's Attendance at Religious Services:				
Not at all or less than once per year	43	16	28	18
1-2 times per year	18	15	30	20
3 or more times per year	39	11	22	13
Respondent Ever in a Defacto Relationship:				
Yes	17	25	38	28
No	83	11	23	15

SOURCE: IFS Family Formation Survey, 1981/82

TABLE 3: PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN AGED 25-34 AGREEING TO PARTICULAR REASONS FOR DELAYING BIRTHS, ACCORDING TO WHETHER THEY HAD A CHILD OR NOT

QUESTION	HAS		CHILDLESS	
	CHILD	TOTAL	NEVER MARRIED	EVER MARRIED
Did you (would you) delay having children:				
- until certain I had enough money	27	60	66	56
- until I had a steady job	6	20	30	12
- until my partner had a steady job	21	63	77	51
- until I felt I could cope	33	70	86	57
- until I felt my partner could cope	30	67	80	57
- because I just did not want to bring children into this world	8	19	26	14
- until we had a house or home	31	42	48	38
- until our marriage was established	37	69	80	61

SOURCE: IFS Family Formation Survey 1981/82

TABLE 4: PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN AGED 25-34 WHO FELT PRESSURE TO
HAVE A CHILD FROM VARIOUS PERSONS, ACCORDING TO WHETHER THEY
NOW HAD A CHILD OR NOT

QUESTION	HAS CHILD	CHILDLESS		
		TOTAL	NEVER MARRIED	EVER MARRIED
Did (do) you feel pressure on you to have children from:				
- your parents	15	34	30	38
- your friends	11	29	19	37
- your partner (only those with a partner)	17	20	18	20
- other relatives (includes in-laws)	13	32	22	40
- yourself	33	39	31	45

SOURCE: IFS Family Formation Survey 1981/82

TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE AGREEMENT ON VARIOUS ATTITUDINAL QUESTIONS
FOR WOMEN AGED 25-34 ACCORDING TO WHETHER THEY HAD A CHILD OR NOT

QUESTION	HAS CHILD	CHILDLESS		
		TOTAL	NEVER MARRIED	EVER MARRIED
Marriage gives you economic security	69	47	37	54
Marriage develops a sense of responsibility in you that you wouldn't have otherwise	79	58	53	62
Having children is an attraction of marriage	66	59	63	55
Important decisions should be made by the husband	16	9	10	9
A woman is only really fulfilled when she becomes a mother	33	12	16	9
Married people are happier than those who go through life without getting married	40	25	20	29
People who question the old and accepted ways of doing things usually end up causing trouble	35	20	26	16
Wives who don't have to work should not do so	52	35	42	30
People should consider the needs of their spouse and children as more important than their own	54	44	47	41
A husband provides protection for his wife	81	67	57	74
A wife should go where her husband wants her to go for his job	71	55	42	64
Husbands should help regularly with the housework	73	91	96	88
People can have a satisfying relationship without children	85	94	93	94

SOURCE: IFS Family Formation Survey 1981/82

Leaving home and returning home: A demographic study of young adults in Australia

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Introduction

The departure of a grownup-child from the family home is one of the main events in the transition to adult independence during the life cycle. It takes an important place among other transition events, completing school, starting work and marrying (Syaiharju, 1974; Winsborough, 1973, 1979).

Similarly, the leaving home of grownup children is one of the main demographic events which determine the progression of the parents through the principal stages of the family life cycle. In particular, the departure of the last child from the family home marks the entry of the parents into the post-parental stage of the family life cycle. This is often regarded as a stress point in the family life cycle, and marks an important transition stage for the parents also (Chudacoff and Hareven, 1979; Young, 1977).

Marriage has maintained a long-standing dominance as the principal, traditional and acceptable reason for leaving home. However in the past decade or so in Australia there has been a trend towards other reasons for leaving home (Young, 1980), and this has been accompanied by several important changes. In particular, since most other reasons for leaving home are generally associated with a younger average age at leaving home, the commonly used figure of average age at marriage is no longer a

suitable indicator of the timing of the leaving home stage.

Secondly, the increasing incidence of leaving home before marriage has resulted in the emergence of a new stage in the transition to young adulthood, namely, a stage of independence between living with the parents and becoming married to begin a new family. This greater extent of living alone has also been observed in other Western countries (European Community, 1982; Di Iulio, 1981; Glick, 1975; Harrison, 1981; Kobrin, 1976). In addition, to some extent the emergence of this new stage has the effect of spacing out the key events in the adult life cycle, i.e., starting work, leaving home, marrying, birth of the first child, the increasing convergence of which had been a cause for some concern (Winsborough, 1975, 1979).

Thirdly, the other reasons for leaving home present a wide range of less permanent commitments and living arrangements, and, accordingly, imply the possibility of returning to the parental home before a final departure. These episodes of returning home are very important from both a demographic and a social perspective, and the discussion of returning home has been included as one of the main themes in this paper.

The Family Formation Survey conducted by the Institute of Family Studies in 1982 has provided an important source of information about the circumstances surrounding, and the dynamics of, leaving home and returning home among young adults. This paper represents the first stage in the analysis of the survey data, and looks at some of the basic characteristics of the leaving home stage, and their implications. Even though the survey contains information

about children leaving home at very young ages, this analysis has been confined to those who left from age 15 years, and so focuses on leaving home as part of the "normal" transition to adulthood.

The structure of the sample according to living at home status

Some indication of the extent to which young people have left and return to the family home is provided by Figure 1, which compares the proportions who have ever left with the proportions actually living away from home at the survey date. In both cases the proportions are higher for females than for males, indicating that more females have left home and are still away from home compared with males. The distance between the two curves, which is also included on the diagram, indicates also that there is a higher proportion of males compared with females who are now living at home after a period away from home. This proportion reaches around 20 per cent at ages 18-20 years among the males, falling to around 10 per cent in the early twenties, with similar but lower values for females.

There are many different subgroups within the sample in relation to the leaving home and returning status of the young adults, and some of the complexity of these is illustrated in Table 1. For example, the broad category, "Ever left home" includes persons in four different categories:

- (1) Left, returned and left again;
- (2) Left, returned and still at home;
- (3) Left at least twice, and now at home; and
- (4) Left at least twice, and not at home.

Similarly, the category "Now at home", includes the three groups:

- (1) Never left home;
- (2) Left, returned and still at home; and
- (3) Left at least twice and now at home.

Table 1 about here

Naturally the relative numbers in each of these categories vary by age group and sex, and some of these differences are summarised in Figure 2 and Table 2. From Figure 2, at the youngest ages 18-19 years, the largest group consists of those who have never left home, followed by smaller groups who have left and never returned, and who have left once and returned. The rectangles at ages 20-24 years demonstrate the growing dominance of the group "Left home and never returned", and "Left, returned and left again", with a larger proportion of females than males in each of these categories. Finally, by ages 25-29 and 30-34 years almost the entire population consists of the two groups, "Left and never returned" and "Left at least twice, and still away from home". Thus the evidence suggests that the major part of the movement from the home and back again is completed by age 25 years, and beyond that age the adult child has finally established independent and permanent living arrangements away from the parents' household.

At the youngest ages, 18-19 years, only about one-sixth of those now living at home has previously lived away from home, at ages 20-24 years the corresponding proportion is one-third, while at ages 25-29 years it has increased to around 60 per cent. In each age group more females than males have ever left home, and the proportion of the total who are now at home is higher for males than females. The proportion of the leavers who have

returned home at least once is also higher for males than for females. Also of note is that at the younger ages many of the first returners have not yet left home again, (See Table 2).

Table 2 about here

Methodology

To overcome the possible bias that can occur because some of the sample have not yet left home and even more have not returned home, two techniques of analysis have been used. One approach is to restrict the analysis to the age group whose members have all, or nearly all left home. From the information available, 26 years appears to be the most appropriate cut-off age. Accordingly, some of the analysis is based on the experience of this older age group, particularly in relation to reasons for leaving home.

The other approach is to use "survival analysis", similar to life-table analysis in demography, in which the probability of a given event, such as leaving home, is calculated during each time interval according to the number of these events occurring and the population at risk during each time interval. The title "survival analysis" refers to the subroutine in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) set of computer programs (Hull and Nie, 1981). The procedure is of special value in analyses in which not all the sample has experienced the terminal event, because it includes these "censored" cases in the population at risk up until their age at the time of the survey, thereby using all the information from the survey. When this life table approach is applied to the incidence of children leaving home, "survival" refers to remaining at home, and the terminal event is leaving home. When

applied to children returning home the analysis is restricted to the subgroup who have ever left home, and "surviving" refers to remaining away from home, while the terminal event is a return to home. Probabilities of survival are calculated at each attained in the case of children leaving home, or at each yearly duration since leaving home in the case of children returning home. Cumulative proportions surviving to each time period are then derived, corresponding to the l_x values in a conventional life table. The life table incidence of leaving home or returning home during each time interval, similar to the d_x values in the conventional life table, is then derived from the difference between successive cumulative proportions surviving. Median values of the distribution, that is the age (or duration, in the case of returning home) at which one-half of the sample has experienced the terminal event can also be derived from the survival function.

Survival analysis - basic patterns of leaving home and returning

The basic cumulative survival curves in relation to leaving home and returning home are given in Figure 3. Apart from the experience at the youngest ages, females leave sooner than males, and by age 20 years less than one-third of females have never left home compared with one-half of males. The median age at leaving is 20.7 years for males compared with 19.5 years for females, and an overall comparison of the test applied to the data indicates that the leaving home experience of males and females is significantly different. These ages are considerably lower than the corresponding values of 23.8 and 21.5 years from data collected in 1971 (Young, 1980).

The set of graphs relating to children returning home after leaving indicates that males are more likely to return than females. The survival curves flatten out after a duration of around six years, and stabilise at a level of 50 per cent of male leavers ever returning home compared with 40 per cent of female leavers. The overall comparison test applied to these curves also indicates a significant difference between males and females.

The age incidence of leaving home, shown in Figure 4, illustrates the younger age pattern of leaving home among females compared with males, and the narrower dispersion of the curve for females. Peaks in leaving home occur at ages 17-18 years among females and at ages 17-21 years among males. The main leaving home activity occurs between ages 16 and 22 years for females and between 16 and 24 years for males.

The age incidence of returning home in relation to duration since leaving, as shown in Figure 5, indicates a peak during the second year away from home, and most of the returning home activity is completed within the first five years or so since leaving home. Again it is evident that males return at earlier durations and are more likely to return home than females.

Reason for leaving home

Although its share of all reasons for leaving home has declined, marriage still accounts for the highest proportion who leave. Among the group aged 26 years or more at the time of the survey, marriage was the reason for first leaving home among 31 per cent of males and 45 per cent of females. Next in importance for males were independence (18 per cent), job opportunity (12 per cent), travel (7 per cent) and study and armed forces (each with 6 per cent).

Migration, conflict, to live with a de facto partner, and living with others accounted for smaller proportions.

Among females, the next most important reasons after marriage for first leaving home were, in order, independence (10 per cent), study, job and conflict (each with 9 per cent), and smaller proportions leaving for travel, to live with others, to live with a de facto partner or to migrate. Overall, higher proportions of females than males left home for the first time for marriage, study and conflict, and lower proportions of females than males left for independence, a job opportunity or to travel, with small and relatively similar proportions leaving for the other reasons.

Because of the relatively high incidence of returning home before the final departure, it is also of interest to examine the reasons for leaving on the last recorded departure from the family home. Again, to avoid the effect of the incomplete experience at the younger ages, this analysis has been confined to the subgroup aged 26 years or more at the time of the survey. The main difference between leaving home for the first time and the last time is the higher proportion who left for marriage at their last departure - 41 per cent of males and 50 per cent of females (compared with 31 and 45 per cent when first leaving home). Except for an increase in the proportions leaving home to live with a de facto partner at the last departure compared with the first, there were declines in the proportions leaving home for all of the other reasons, particularly study, for both males and females, and travel, for males. However the changes were quite small for the other large categories, independence and job. (See Tables 7 and 8).

It is possible that there is still some incompleteness in the leaving home of this older group, and this could result in further slight increases in the proportions who eventually leave home for marriage. However, even with a possible increase, these proportions would be considerably lower than the corresponding values of around 70 per cent for males and 80 per cent for females observed for all ages from data collected in 1971 (Young, 1974).

An analysis of the experience of those aged 26 years or more suggests that many of those who first left home for other reasons subsequently left home for marriage, although marriage was a less important reason among males who had first left home to study and females who had originally left because of conflict at home. Further analysis shows that females who had first left home for study, a job or independence were relatively more likely to subsequently leave for marriage in comparison with males who had first left for these reasons. It is also interesting to note that "independence" remains an important reason for a subsequent departure among those who had originally left for independence (and for travel), and "conflict" remains an important reason for those who had originally left for conflict. In addition, leaving home for the last time for study or a job is largely confined to those who had originally left for those reasons or to join the armed forces. This suggests that the subsequent leaving home experience of young adults is partly determined by their first reason for leaving home.

Table 3 about here

Destination after leaving home

Overall, among the group aged 26 years or more the most common residence arrangement when first leaving home was with a legal

partner (33 per cent of males and 47 per cent of females) followed by friends (20 per cent of males and 17 per cent of females). 13 per cent of males but only 4 per cent of females first went to live alone, and only 3 per cent of each first lived with a *de facto* partner. Similar proportions of males and females went to live with relatives, or at boarding schools or other institutions (with 9 per cent in each).

This distribution of destinations changed on the last occasion of leaving home, with higher proportions going to live with a legal partner (45 per cent of males and 58 per cent of females) and slight increases in the proportions living with a *de facto* partner or alone. From the first to the last departure there were relatively large decreases in the proportions going to live with friends or in a boarding house or other institution and a smaller decrease for those going to live with relatives.

Table 4 about here

In terms of geographic location, about one-tenth of those who had first left home had gone to live in the same suburb as their parents, with slightly higher proportions for females than males. About 40-44 per cent had gone to live in another suburb in the same city as their parents when they first left home, increasing to 46-47 per cent on their last departure from home. About one-quarter had moved elsewhere in the same State when they had first left, and this proportion decreased slightly on the last departure. About one-tenth had gone to live elsewhere in the same country (more common for males than for females), and this proportion was also slightly lower on the final departure. Another one-tenth had moved to

another country when leaving home, this destination being more common for males than females. Overall, destinations at the last move away from home were closer to the parents than the first destination had been.

Residence arrangements in relation to reason for leaving home

Among those leaving for independence, males went to live mainly with friends or alone, while females leaving for the same reason went to friends, relatives, or to live alone. The reasons, marriage, and to live with a de facto partner show the expected living arrangements. Similarly the reason, to live with others, usually resulted in living with friends, or less often with relatives. Travel and migration usually involved a relatively high proportion living with relatives, friends, moving about, or alone (more often for males than for females). More than one-half of those who left home to study went to a boarding house, or other institution, and fewer went to stay with friends or relatives.

Those leaving home for a job opportunity included some going to a boarding house, and others going to friends, relatives, or being alone, in that order. Conflict as the reason for leaving home usually resulted in living with friends, and there were smaller proportions going to relatives, living alone, or to a de facto relationship (more common for females than for males).

Tables 5 and 6 about here

Influence of reason for leaving on age at leaving home

Because a large proportion of those at the younger ages have not yet left home, and because it seems unwise to attach much reliability to their expected reason for leaving home, the survival

analysis regarding the influence of reason for leaving home on the age at leaving home has been restricted to the group aged 26 years or more at the time of the survey.

Figure 7 demonstrates the findings from the survival analysis according to the experience of this group. For both sexes those leaving home for reasons other than marriage leave sooner than those leaving for marriage. The median age of males when leaving home for other reasons is 19.4 years, and when leaving home for marriage is 22.6 years. Among females, the corresponding median ages are 18.6 years and 20.3 years. It is of interest that there is a greater difference between the median ages for males leaving for the two different reasons than there is for females. Also, the experience of females is closer to that of males when the reason for leaving is non-marriage than when it is marriage.

The younger age incidence of leaving home for other reasons compared with leaving for marriage is further illustrated in Figure 8. These diagrams also highlight the difference in leaving home between males and females. Peak ages at leaving home among males occur at 18-20 years for other reasons and 21 years for marriage, while among females the peaks are observed at ages 17-18 years and 20-21 years. It must be remembered that the experience so described for those who leave home for marriage in no way represents the age distribution at marriage of the total population. As explained earlier, those who left home for the first time for marriage represent only 31 per cent of males and 45 per cent of females. Therefore the group that left home for marriage represents a minority, particularly among males, and so is likely to have

distinct background characteristics.

Further analysis suggests that study and conflict as reasons for leaving are associated with young ages at leaving home for both sexes. Among males, slightly higher ages at leaving occur when the reason is job or travel, with a higher age pattern for independence, and the highest for marriage. Among females, slightly higher ages occur when a job is the reason for leaving, then independence, with the highest ages associated with marriage and travel. Average ages at leaving home for males and females are similar only for one reason, study. For all reasons except travel, the mean ages of females when leaving are lower than those of males. The differences are only around one-half of a year when the reason is a job, increase to about one one year for conflict, about one and one-half years for independence, and to over two years when the reason for leaving is marriage.

Influence of schooling on leaving home

One of the most important background variables influencing the leaving home experience of young adults is the level of schooling attained. Those leaving school at the youngest ages, 14 or 15 years, tend to leave home sooner than those staying until they reach 16 or 17 years, who in turn leave sooner than those who stay at school until they are aged 18 years or more. The patterns are similar for males and females, and there are significant differences in the ages at leaving home between each level of schooling for both sexes. (See Figure 6).

The median ages at which males leave home according to each age at completing school, begin at 19.7 years for the youngest age, and

increase to 20.8 years, and then 21.3 years for the next two levels. The corresponding values for females are 18.8, 19.8 and 20.4 years. Thus, for each age group at leaving school, females have a median age at leaving home which is approximately one year lower than the corresponding value for males.

The distribution of reasons for leaving home in relation to the age at leaving school, for the subgroup aged 26-34 years at the survey is given in Tables 7 and 8. When reasons for leaving home for either the first or the last time are considered, males and females with the highest age at completing school are least likely to leave home for marriage. In addition, the differences between the lowest and highest proportions leaving home for marriage are greater for females than for males (a difference of 21-25 per cent compared with 12-13 per cent). Among males the peak in the proportions leaving for marriage at the middle ages at leaving school possibly occurs because a high proportion of those with the lowest level of schooling left home for a job. All of the subgroups show an increase in the proportion leaving home for marriage on the last departure from home compared with the first, and the differences are usually greater for males than for females. However, females with the highest age at leaving school show an unusually large increase in the proportion leaving home for marriage.

Tables 7 and 8 about here

Other main observations are that higher proportions of both males and females with the later age at leaving school leave home to study. However, among males the proportions leaving home for a job are inversely proportional to the age at leaving school, and among

females the highest proportion leaving for a job occurs at a school-leaving age of 16-17 years. While the proportion leaving home for conflict declines with each later age at completing school among females, among males conflict as a reason for leaving home occurs slightly more often among those with the youngest and oldest ages at leaving school. The high proportion of the early school leavers who are now leaving for independence is in sharp contrast to the situation observed in 1971 (Young, 1974), when independence was common only among those with the higher levels of schooling. Likewise, the large proportions of early school leavers who are now leaving home for a job is also in contrast to the 1971 findings.

Influence of population size on leaving home

Another important background factor in the leaving home process is the size of the population in the locality where the respondent was living when aged about 15 years. Those who had been living in a small town or rural area had a median age of leaving home of 19.3 years for males and 18.6 years for females. This increased to 20.4 years and 18.9 years for males and females from large towns, and to 21.2 and 20.2 years for males and females from major cities. This confirms the pattern observed from 1971 Census data (Young, 1977).

For both males and females the proportions who had left for study or a job were inversely proportional to the size of the locality where the respondent had lived at around age 15 years. For study, the proportions relating those from major cities, large towns and small towns, are 4, 10 and 13 per cent for males and 6, 11 and 13 per cent for females, while when the reason for leaving is a job, the corresponding proportions are 10, 16 and 28 per cent for males

and 5, 9 and 17 per cent for females. Males from small towns were particularly less likely to have left for marriage. A higher proportion of both males and females from these smaller population areas had lived in a boarding house or other institution when leaving home for the first time. Compared with the remaining population, males from small towns and rural areas were also relatively more likely to first live alone or with relatives, and less likely to live with friends.

Returning home in relation to the reason for leaving home

As might be expected, the reason for leaving home has a strong influence on the probability of returning home, as is illustrated in Figures 9 and 10. For both sexes, there is a relatively low proportion who ever return after leaving for marriage (10-15 per cent) and this is in sharp contrast to the proportions who ever return among those who left for other reasons.

Among males, the highest probability of ever returning occurs among those who leave for conflict or to travel or migrate (70 per cent), then by those who leave for a job, to study, to be independent, or to live with a de facto partner (50-60 per cent). The experience of females is somewhat similar. About 50 per cent of females who leave to live with a de facto partner, for a job, to study or because of conflict at home, eventually return home. For females, the highest probability of returning is observed among the group who leave to be independent, or to travel or migrate (around 65 per cent).

Although, overall, males are more likely to return home than females, there are variations in this relationship when male and female differences are looked at separately for each reason for leaving home.

For some reasons, to live with a de facto partner, to travel or migrate, or to study, there is no significant difference in the probability of returning home between the two sexes. For two reasons, marriage and to be independent, females are more likely to return than males, while for the two remaining reasons, job and conflict, males are more likely to go back home than are females.

If those who leave home for marriage are excluded from the survival analysis of the overall patterns of returning home, then it is found that firstly, higher proportions of both males and females eventually return home - 60 per cent of males and 54 per cent of females compared with 50 per cent of males and 40 per cent of females when all reasons for leaving home are considered. (Note that the effect of excluding those who left for marriage is greater for females than for males.) Secondly, while more males return home than females even when marriage is excluded, the difference between the two sexes is reduced, and the overall comparison test between male and female experience shows no significance. Whether or not those leaving for marriage are included, the median duration of returning among those who ever return is 2.0 years for males and 1.8 years for females.

Reasons for returning home

The most common reasons for returning home among males are convenient (21 per cent), completion of job (15 per cent), financial (14 per cent), completion of travel (11 per cent) and loneliness or illness of self (11 per cent).

Among females the reasons most often stated for returning home were convenient (17 per cent), loneliness or illness (16 per cent),

financial (16 per cent), completion of travel (13 per cent), parents' request or parents' situation (9 per cent) and breakup of marriage (9 per cent).

Convenient and completion of job were relatively more common reasons for returning home among males than females, while the reasons, parents' request, loneliness or illness of self, and breakup of marriage, were relatively more common among females. Of interest is that relatively few stated unemployment as a main reason for returning home.

Table 9 about here

Certain types of reasons for returning home seemed to be associated with certain reasons for originally leaving home, and these showed a fairly consistent pattern between males and females. For both, financial and personal problems (i.e. loneliness, illness) were associated with leaving home for independence and conflict. Achievement of the purpose of the original departure and convenience were associated with leaving home for travel, study and job, while the breakup of the marriage and the parents' situation were reasons for returning home which were associated with initially leaving home for marriage.

Table 10 about here

Returning home in relation to age at leaving home

The probability that a young adult eventually returns home after leaving also shows a strong association with the age at leaving home. (See Figures 11 and 12). Proportions remaining away from home are highest for those leaving at ages 22-24 years, and only about 20 per cent of these return. With each lower age at leaving home, the

proportions who ever return increase, and the differences between males and females also become greater. At all ages of leaving home, more males than females return. Accordingly, with an age of leaving home of 20-21 years, 48 per cent of males and 32 per cent of females return home, for ages 18-19 years the values are 53 and 40 per cent, while for the youngest ages at leaving home almost two-thirds of the males and about one-half of the females eventually return home.

These differences are partly due to the fact that marriage is associated with a later age at leaving home and with a lower probability of returning home. Moreover, marriage is also a more common reason for leaving home among females than among males. If those who leave home for marriage are excluded from the survival analysis, the differences are reduced. However, the experience of those with the high age at leaving, i.e. 22-24 years, still remains distinct from those who left at the younger ages. (See Figures 11 and 12). Overall the effect of removing those who had originally left home for marriage has a greater effect on females than on males, and while the overall comparison test still shows significant differences according to age at leaving home for males, there are no longer significant differences for the females.

Similarly, male-female differences in the proportions returning home in relation to age at leaving home diminish when those leaving for marriage are excluded from the survival analysis. Although there are still higher proportions of males returning home than females for each age at leaving home, the differences are no longer significant.

These findings reinforce some of the earlier conclusions that males and females have relatively similar experience when leaving home for reasons other than marriage. It is their different experience when leaving home for marriage, particularly the younger ages of females and the higher proportions of females who leave for this reason, which accounts for much of the overall male-female differences in leaving and returning home.

Conclusion

Some of the earlier characteristics of the leaving home stage have been retained, notably the younger ages of leaving home among females compared with males, the higher proportions of females leaving for marriage compared with males, ^{and} the later age at leaving home among those who leave for marriage in comparison with those who leave for other reasons. Also, males and females who leave for other reasons continue to show greater similarity in leaving home experience compared with those who leave for marriage. Of interest is the emergence of returning home as a common event after leaving home, usually taking place within the first few years after the initial departure, and involving around 50 per cent of males and 40 per cent of females.

To some extent, the reason for first leaving home appears to be an indication of the future life course of young adults with respect to the probability of returning home, the reason for returning, and the reason for leaving again. Some reasons seem to relate to a definite purpose in leaving home and to imply a return to home at the achievement of the original purpose, particularly job, education and, to some extent, travel. Other reasons for

leaving home, particularly independence and conflict, seem to relate to a discontent with living at home. These also seem to result in a higher rate of return to home and often a return because of problems such as financial difficulties or loneliness. It is therefore of some concern that increasing proportions of young people are leaving home for independence and conflict, particularly those with a younger age at leaving school.

Leaving home for reasons other than marriage represents a different type of independence compared to leaving for marriage, being characterised particularly by less contact with the parents after leaving and more parental disapproval associated with the child's departure. Moreover, the wider options of leaving home for reasons other than marriage introduce more choices into the transition stage of young adults, and so require more decisions. Now there is the decision to be made about whether to wait for marriage as the means of leaving home or to leave earlier for another reason. If the latter course is taken there is a need for a subsequent decision about if and when to return home. These choices would appear to present special difficulties to young women, who have been more confined than males by the traditional role of marriage in the leaving home process.

Since fewer young adults are leaving home for marriage, and since the probability of returning home is greater among those who leave for reasons other than marriage, a likely trend is an increasing incidence of returning home during the transition to independence. While some young people will continue to defer their leaving home until marriage, a considerable proportion of the

others will experience an interim stage of independence characterised by episodes of temporary departure from, and temporary return to, home. For this group, there will be an earlier start to, and a longer duration of, both the transition to independence for the young adult, and the transition to the post-parental stage for the parents. This also raises the question: Which is the more significant event, the first or the final departure from home?

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Table 1: Distribution of the sample according to all possibilities of leaving home and returning home.

Characteristic	Numbers	
	Males	Females
1. Never left home	260	190
2. Ever left home = 3+4	1017	1070
3. Left, and returned at least once = 5+6	448	399
4. Left, and never returned	569	670
5. Left, returned and left again = 7+8	361	345
6. Left, returned and still at home	86	54
7. Left at least twice and now at home	34	26
8. Left at least twice and not at home	327	320
9. Now at home = 1+6+7	380	270
10. Total sample = 1+2 = 1+4+6+7+8	1277	1260

Note that there are minor differences in the sums and total due to rounding of weighted figures.

Table 2: Characteristics of the sample in relation to leaving home and returning home status, according to age group.

Characteristics	Age in years			
	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34
Percentages				
Proportion of total who have ever left home (2:10)	M 31	69	94	98
	F 39	80	98	98
Proportion of ever left who have returned at least once (3:2)	M 56	48	45	38
	F 44	41	37	34
Proportion of first returners who ever left again (5:3)	M 32	67	88	95
	F 41	79	92	99
Proportion of second or more leavers who are now at home (7:5)	M *	24	5	3
	F *	14	3	2
Proportion of total who are now at home (9:10)	M 82	47	13	5
	F 75	31	6	3
Proportion of those now at home who have never left (1:9)	M 84	66	43	*
	F 82	66	39	*

The numbers in brackets refer to the numbers alongside each characteristic in Table 1.

* Denominator contains less than 20 cases.

Table 3: Main reasons for leaving home the last time in relation to reason for leaving the first time. Subgroup aged 26 years or more at the time of the survey

Reason for leaving the first time	Main reasons for leaving the last time in order of importance		
MALES			
Independence	Marriage	Independence	Live partner
Marriage	Live w.partner	Independence	
Live with others	Marriage		
Travel	Marriage	Independence	Travel
Study	Job	Independence	Marriage
Armed forces	Marriage	Study	Independence
Job	Marriage	Job	Independence
Conflict	Marriage	Conflict	
FEMALES			
Independence	Marriage	Independence	Job
Marriage	Live w.partner	Independence	Marriage
Travel	Marriage	Independence	
Study	Marriage	Migrate	Study
Job	Marriage	Job	Independence
Conflict	Conflict	Marriage	

Table 4 : Where the young adult lived and with whom, on the first and last occasions of leaving home. Subgroup aged 26 years or more at the time of the survey

Where	Males		Females	
	F	L	F	L
Percentages				
Same suburb	11	11	13	12
Same city	40	46	44	47
Same state	23	22	24	22
Same country	14	9	10	9
Another country	10	10	7	8
Moved around	2	2	1	1
Don't know, etc.	-	-	1	1
Sum	100	100	100	100
With whom	F		F	
	F	L	F	L
Alone	13	14	4	5
Legal partner	33	45	47	58
De facto partner	3	6	3	5
Friends	20	15	17	11
Relatives	9	8	9	7
Institution, boarding house etc.	9	4	9	5
Other	13	8	11	9
Sum	100	100	100	100
n	594	594	614	614
F = First time L = Last time				

Table 5 : Living arrangements of males after leaving home in relation to the reason for leaving.

Reason for leaving	Alone	Spouse with or without others	De-facto with or without others	Friends	Relatives	Institution, boarding house etc.	Other	Sum	n
Percentages									
Independence	23	7	3	54	8	1	4	100	181
Marriage	1	98	1	-	-	-	-	100	226
Live with partner	-	6	78	11	5	-	-	100	42
Live with others	4	-	-	77	15	-	4	100	28
Travel	15	-	5	35	14	9	22	100	64
Migrate	37	13	-	13	37	-	-	100	27
Study	8	-	-	18	9	57	8	100	86
Armed forces	3	-	-	-	-	13	84	100	43
Job	13	1	-	23	19	14	30	100	140
Conflict	16	-	5	45	16	3	15	100	70
Other	16	6	1	19	22	17	19	100	100

Table 6 : Living arrangements of females after leaving home in relation to the reason for leaving.

Reason for leaving	Alone	Spouse with or without others	De-facto with or without others	Friends	Relatives	Institution, boarding house etc.	Other	Sum	n
Percentages									
Independence	15	3	3	48	17	6	6	100	122
Marriage	-	99	1	-	-	-	-	100	393
Live with partner	-	3	92	1	2	-	2	100	43
Live with others	-	-	-	80	14	-	6	100	34
Travel	7	-	3	20	22	6	42	100	45
Migrate	6	10	-	40	40	-	4	100	24
Study	-	-	2	12	10	53	23	100	109
Job	8	2	-	21	18	17	34	100	92
Conflict	9	2	12	46	14	7	10	100	116
Other	8	5	2	30	18	15	22	100	87

Table 7: Main reason for leaving home the first and last time, by age at completing secondary school. Subgroup aged 26 years or more at the time of the survey, who have left home at least once.

Males

Reason for leaving home	Age at completing secondary school							
	14-15		16-17		18+		All	
	F	L	F	L	F	L	F	L
	Percentages							
Independence	19	17	17	17	22	20	18	17
Marriage	30	41	35	44	23	31	31	41
Live with partner	2	4	3	7	3	2	3	5
Live with others	2	2	3	1	2	-	2	1
Travel	8	4	8	4	5	2	7	4
Migrate	5	7	2	3	4	6	4	5
Study	2	-	5	2	14	10	6	3
Armed forces	7	6	6	3	3	-	6	3
Job	16	11	12	13	6	8	12	11
Conflict	5	4	3	1	4	5	4	3
Other	4	4	6	5	14	6	7	7
Sum	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	594 594							

F = first time

L = last time

Table 8 : Main reason for leaving home the first and last time by age at completing secondary school. Subgroup aged 26 years or more at the time of the survey, who have left home at least once.

Females

Reason for leaving home	Age at completing secondary school							
	14-15		16-17		18+		All	
	F	L	F	L	F	L	F	L
Percentages								
Independence	8	4	11	10	12	20	10	9
Marriage	55	61	41	44	30	40	45	50
Live with partner	2	5	2	4	3	2	2	4
Live with others	2	3	3	2	3	1	3	2
Travel	5	3	4	3	6	3	4	3
Migrate	2	2	2	3	4	6	2	3
Study	2	1	11	8	20	10	9	5
Job*	7	5	12	11	8	4	9	8
Conflict	11	8	8	6	5	4	9	7
Other	6	8	6	9	9	10	7	9
Sum	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	614 614							

* and armed forces

F = first time

L = last time

Table 9 : Main reason for returning home the first time. Subgroup aged 26 years and over at the time of the survey.

Reason	Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%
Convenient	49	21	32	17
Completion of study	11	5	10	5
Completion of job	34	15	14	7
Completion of travel	26	11	26	13
Returned for visit	7	3	3	2
Parents' request, parents' situation	11	5	18	9
Loneliness, illness - self	26	11	31	16
Unemployment	10	4	3	2
Breakup flatmate	11	5	7	4
Breakup partner	5	2	2	1
Breakup marriage	8	4	16	8
Financial - to save money, cheap accommodation	32	14	30	16
Sum	230	100	192	100

Table 10: Main reasons for returning home the first time in relation to the reason for leaving home for the first time. Subgroup aged 26 years or more at the time of the survey.

Reason for leaving the first time	Main reasons for returning home the first time in order of importance	
MALES		
Independence	Financial	Personal problems
Marriage	Breakup of marr.	Parents' situation
Live with others	Breakup of flatmates	Convenient
Travel	Completion of travel	Financial Convenient
Study	Convenient	Completion of study
Job	Convenient	Completion of job
Conflict	Financial	Personal problems
FEMALES		
Independence	Personal problems	Financial
Marriage	Breakup of marr.	Convenient Parents' sit.
Travel	Completion of travel	
Study	Completion of study	Convenient
Job	Completion of job	Convenient
Conflict	Financial	Personal problems

Figure 1 : Distribution of males and females in the sample according to their leaving home and returning home status.

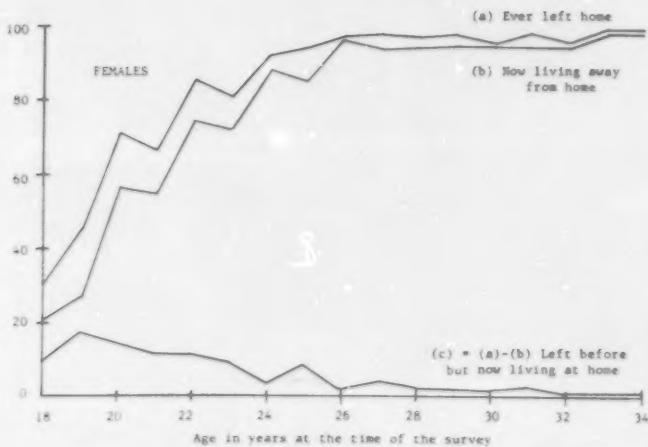
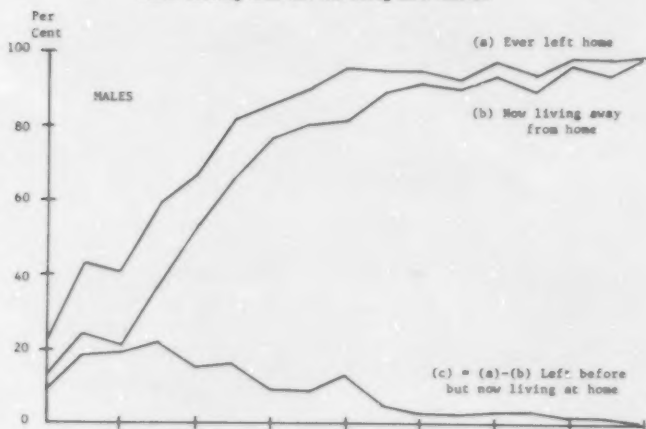
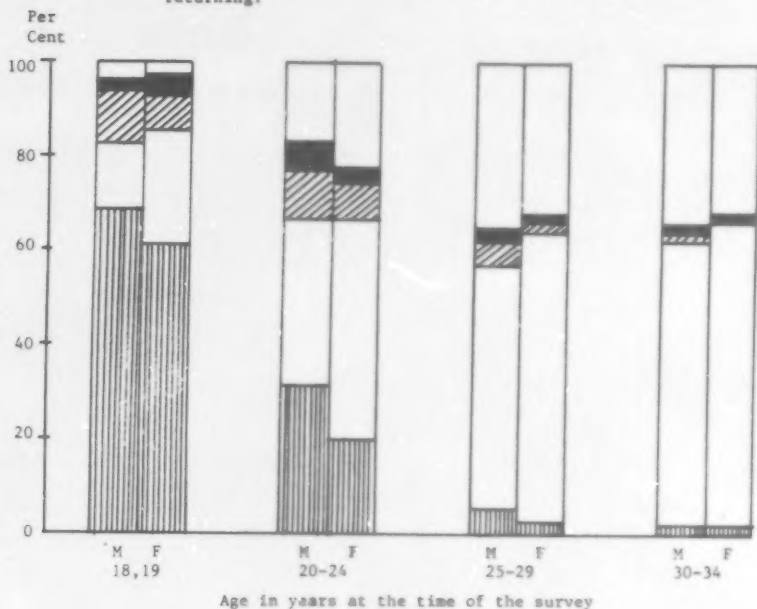


Figure 2 : Proportional distribution of the sample according to whether the young adults have never left home, ever left home, ever returned, or stayed at home after leaving.



 Never left home
 Left home, and never returned (lower)
 Left home, returned, and now living at home

 Left, returned, left again, returned, and now living at home
 Left, returned, left again, returned, and not returned since (upper)

Figure 3 : Survival analysis. (a) Proportion who had never left home, as at the start of each age interval, and (b) proportion who had never returned home, as at the start of each yearly interval since leaving home.

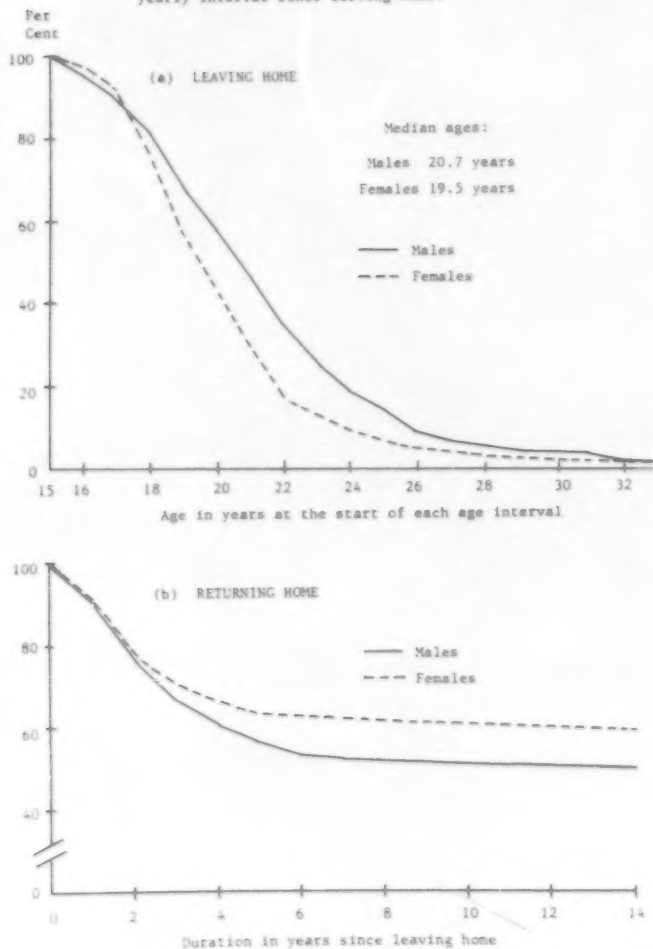


Figure 4 : Survival analysis. Age incidence of males and females leaving home.

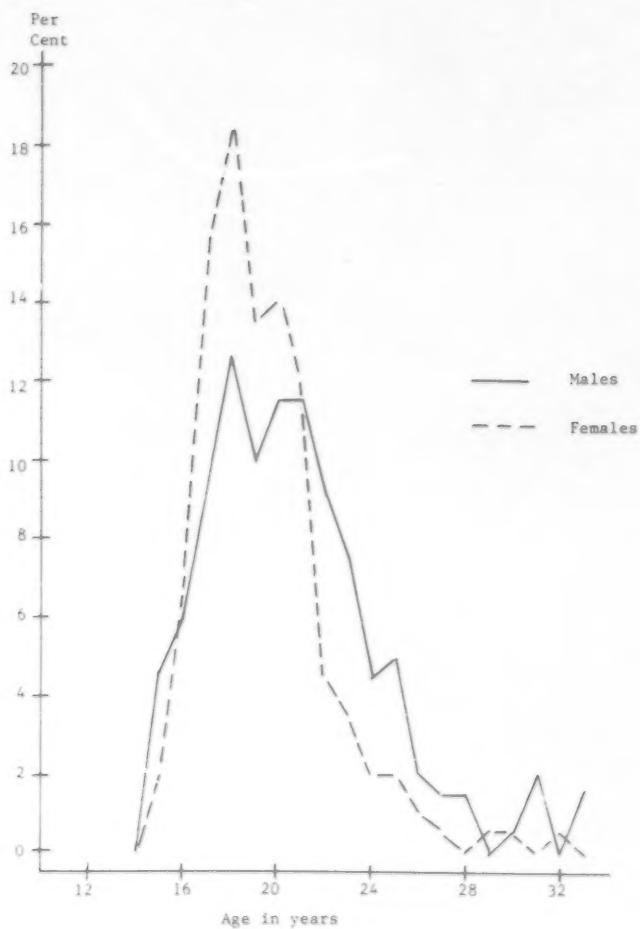


Figure 5 : Survival analysis. Incidence of males and females returning home according to the duration in years since leaving home.

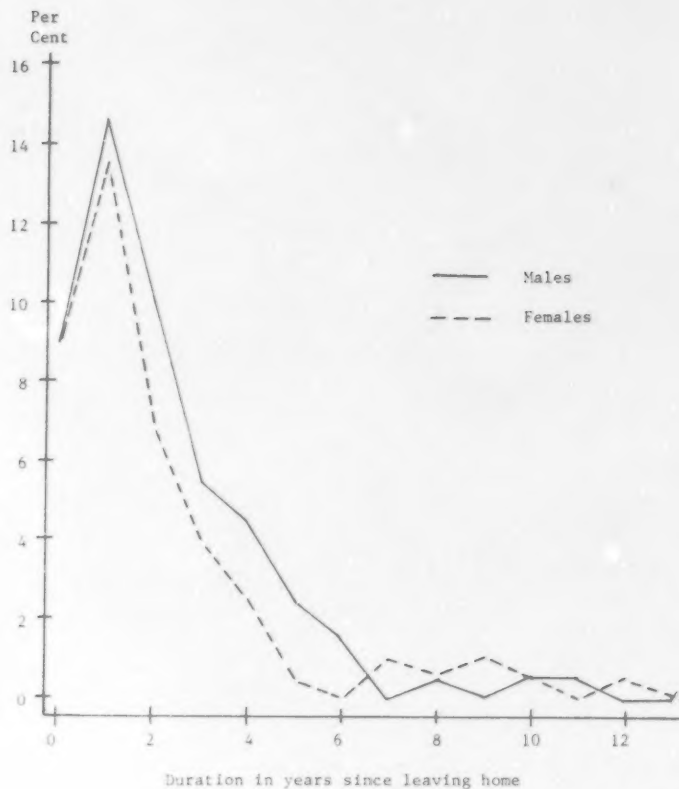


Figure 6 : Survival analysis. Proportion of males and females who had never left home, as at the start of each age interval, according to age at leaving secondary school.

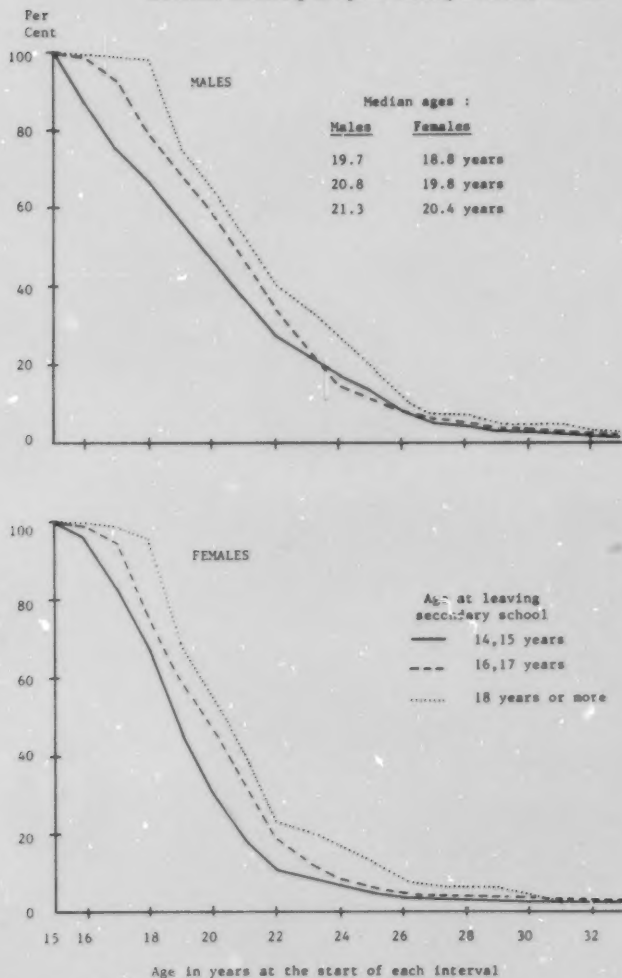
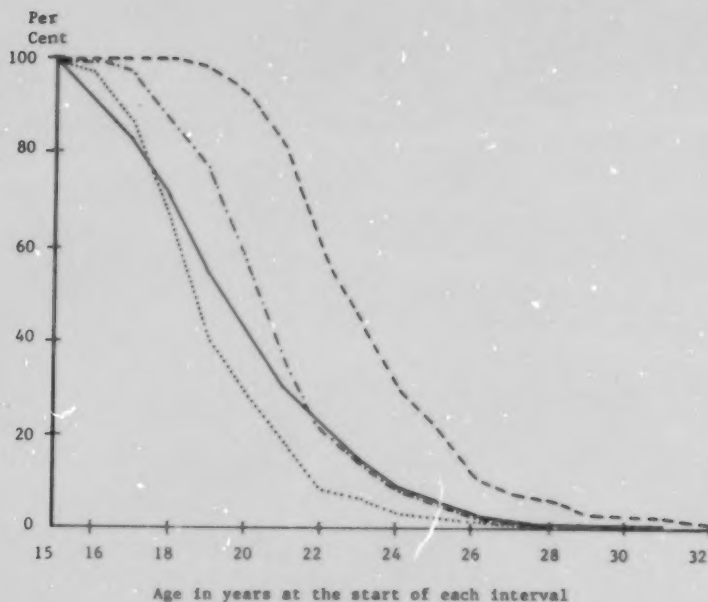


Figure 7 : Survival analysis. Proportion of males and females who had never left home, as at the start of each age interval, according to whether they left for marriage or for other reasons. Subgroup aged 26 years or more at the time of the survey.



Median ages :

19.4 years	—	Males - not marriage
18.6 years		Females - not marriage
22.6 years	---	Males - marriage
20.3 years	-.-.-	Females - marriage

Figure 8 : Survival analysis. Age incidence of males and females leaving home according to whether they left for marriage or other reasons. Subgroup aged 26 years or more at the time of the survey.

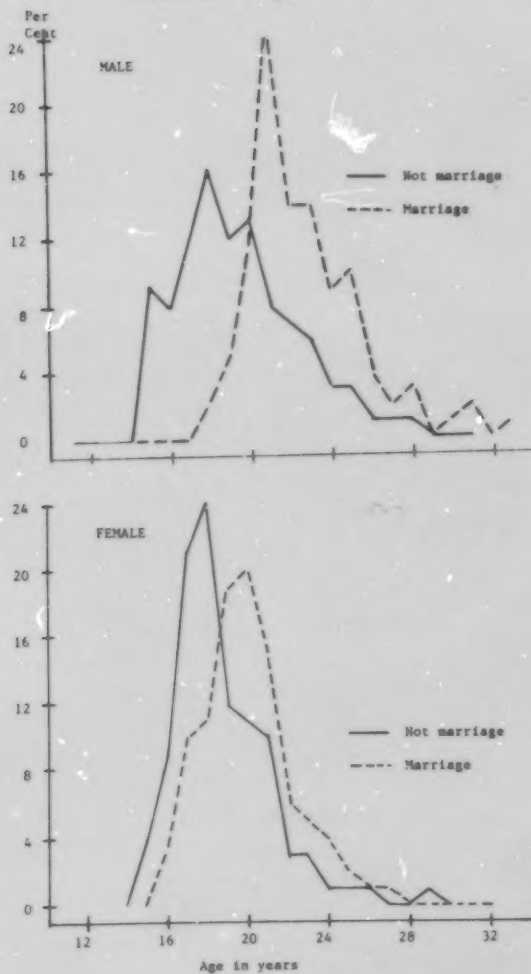


Figure 9 : Survival analysis. Proportion of males who had never returned home, according to reason for leaving home.

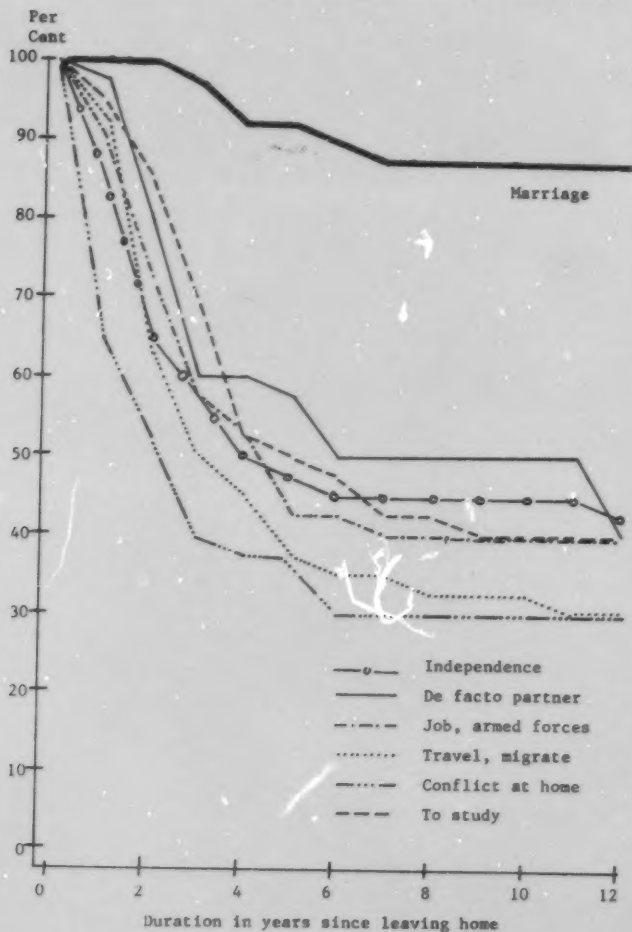


Figure 10 : Survival analysis. Proportion of females who had never returned home, according to reason for leaving home.

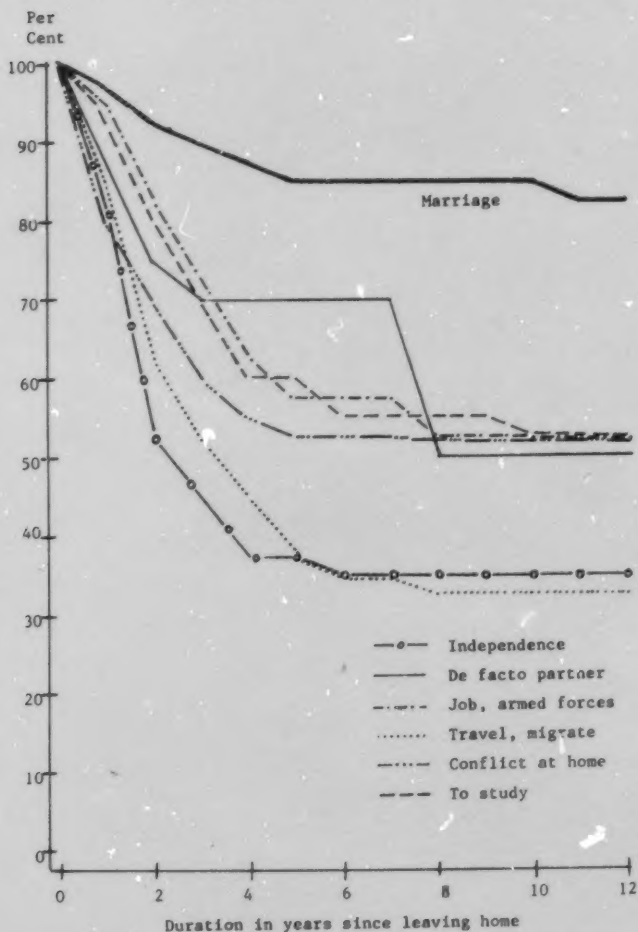


Figure 11 : Survival analysis. Proportion of males who had never returned home, according to age at leaving home. All reasons for leaving.

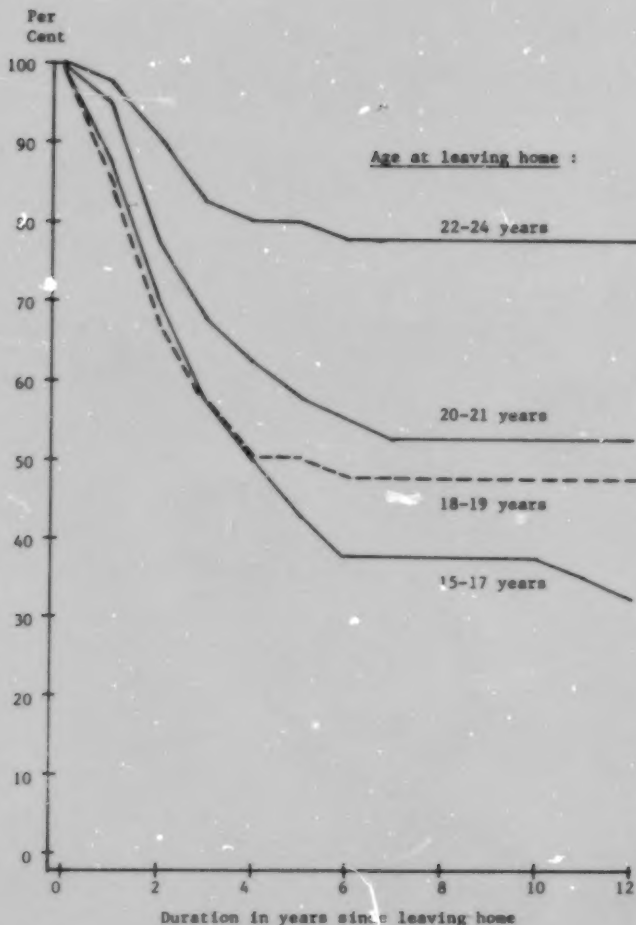
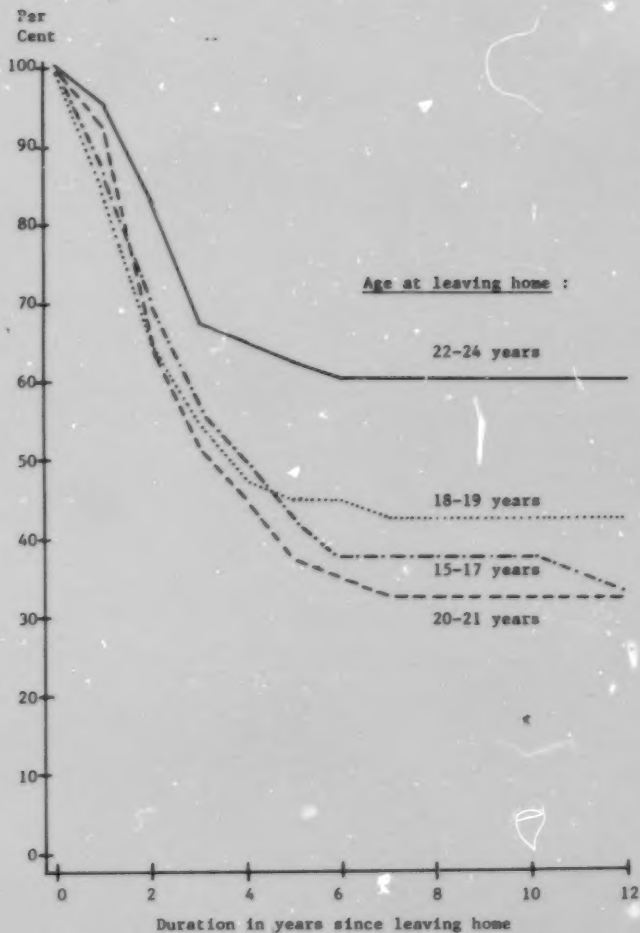


Figure 12 : Survival analysis. Proportion of males who had never returned home, according to age at leaving home. Excluding those who left for marriages.



The transition to marriage: Trends in age at first marriage and proportions marrying in Australia

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Introduction

The theme of this section of the conference is family formation. It may be argued that the process of family formation commences for an individual when he or she either takes a partner or becomes a parent, whichever event occurs earlier in the life cycle. Historically in Australia partnering followed by parenting has been the normal sequence. Historically, too, the taking of a partner has usually been marked by a formal marriage ceremony. Certainly informal cohabitation was common during the convict era (McDonald, 1974; Sweeney, 1981), and through the 1970s living together as a prelude if not an alternative to formal marriage has become increasingly popular. But that marriage and partnering, and hence marriage and family formation have been closely associated throughout most of the period of European settlement in Australia is beyond dispute.

It follows that an understanding of patterns of entry into first marriages and of changes in these patterns is fundamental to an appreciation of the process of family formation and changes therein. This paper pursues these themes, concentrating on the

two major dimensions of first marriage patterns on which census and vital registration data shed light: age at first marriage and the proportion of the population who ever marry. The period traversed is roughly that since 1920, and within that period particular attention is devoted, first, to the so-called marriage boom which extended from about 1940 through to the early 1970s, and second, to the major downturn in first marriage activity which has occurred more recently. Naturally, there is particular interest in current attitudes bearing on marriage among Australian young people. Data on this theme from the 1981-82 IPS survey of 18-34 year-olds are introduced.

Age at First Marriage and Proportions Marrying 1920-1970

Until the early 1970s the dominant features of twentieth century first marriage trends in Australia were pronounced movements toward more universal marriage and marriage at younger ages for both sexes. The broad outlines of these changes can be detected in changes over successive censuses in percentages of males and females never married in five-year age groups (Table 1). The percentage never married in age group 45-49 gives an indication of the extent to which birth cohorts making up that age group never marry at all (Spencer, 1969b; McDonald, 1982). Over the sixty year period 1921-81 this percentage declined persistently from 19.7 to 8.1 for males and from 16.6 to 4.1 for females. In the course of these declines an approximate parity was achieved between the male and female figures at the 1933 census, but since

1954 the drop for males has been 3.5 percentage points compared to 6.3 points for females. This reflects the impact on the marriage prospects of the two sexes of the substantial influx of European migrants to Australia during the 1950s, among whom males were considerably more numerous than females.

Whilst declines in percentages never married at ages 45-49 were still in progress at the 1981 census it would be wrong to infer that the trend toward more universal marriage also was still in progress. Persons aged 45-49 in 1981 were mainly married during the 1950s and early 1960s, and their high probabilities of having married are essentially a reflection of the popularity of matrimony during that period. If attention is focused on age groups 20-24 and 25-29 in Table 1 decreases in percentages never married are evident between 1933 and 1971, these having been followed by initially gradual and then very steep increases.

The evidence in Table 1 for the trend toward earlier marriage is the extent of the 1933-71 declines in percentages never married at ages 20-24 and 25-29. For males they respectively amounted to 23.3 and 30.4 percentage points and for females to 33.1 and 26.0 percentage points. Given that persons aged 20-29 in 1933 were on average aged 45-49 in the mid-1950s, when around 11 percent of males and 10 percent of females were still unmarried at those ages, there is no possibility that these declines reflect merely an increased propensity to marry. A change in the age distribution of first marriages toward younger ages is also

indicated.

A rough indication as to the timing of this change is given by the distributions of declines in percentages never married at ages 20-24 and 25-29 among the intercensal periods making up the period 1933-71. The period 1933-47 was important for both sexes as, for females, was that from 1947 to 1954. Thereafter, female ages at first marriage would appear to have remained fairly stable until the late 1960s, when a further decline seems to have occurred. For males Table 1 is consistent with a steady decline in age at first marriage having continued throughout the period 1947-66, with this trend accelerating somewhat during 1966-71.

Period Trends

For more detailed analysis of trends in the frequency and timing of marriage it is necessary to turn to annual statistics of marriages registered. These, in conjunction with annual population estimates, permit a range of period, or cross-sectional measures to be calculated. From among these the index of total first marriages has been judged to be the most stable and reliable measure of the intensity of first marriage activity when, as in Australia over the period under review, age at first marriage is changing (Wunsch, 1969; McDonald, 1974). It inherently standardises for age, and is defined as the sum over all marriageable ages of the ratio first marriages at age x (a single-year age group) divided by the mid-year population aged x .

Essentially it may be interpreted as indicating the proportion of members of a birth cohort who would ever marry if that cohort experienced through its life cycle the age-specific first marriage ratios prevailing in the calendar year to which it relates.

Indexes of total first marriages by sex are shown in Figure 1. Over certain periods they assume values greater than 1000, implying more than universal marriage in the synthetic cohorts to which those values relate. This is clearly an impossible result for any real birth cohort, and was the subject of some debate when first noted for Australia (Spencer, 1969b, 1971; Sivamurthy, 1970; McDonald and Jain, 1972). It arises from the interplay of three considerations. First, first marriage is a fairly widespread experience. Second, historical periods favourable to marriage affect different birth cohorts simultaneously at different stages of their respective life cycles. Third, when age at first marriage is declining, older and younger age patterns of first marriage are concurrently being followed by respectively earlier and more recent birth cohorts. Each of the latter two mechanisms results in heaping of first marriages during certain periods such as can lead to 'impossibly' high indexes of total first marriages.

Figure 1 indicates that first marriage intensity declined for both sexes in the early 1920s as a backlog of marriages postponed during World War I was cleared. During the mid-1920s trends were

steadily upward for females but gently downward for males until, during 1927-31, both indexes of total first marriages plummeted. The setback due to the Depression was, however, temporary. Four years later first marriage intensity had more than regained its 1927 levels, and it continued to increase until, during the early years of World War II, marriages took place on a scale both unprecedented and never subsequently repeated.

This spate of first marriages, which was the common experience of several countries involved in the War (Duvall, 1942; Prince, 1942; Panunzio, 1943; Hajnal, 1953; Benjamin, 1963; Jain, 1972), was made possible by the postponement of marriages during the 1930s and, more importantly, by the scope that existed for considerable decline in age at first marriage. With many young males overseas during 1943-45 indexes of total first marriages fell steeply again, but partly because of some 15 thousand marriages involving American servicemen during 1942-45 (Moore, 1981) they did not fall far below the level implying universal marriage if interpreted in life cycle terms. The restoration of peace brought another upsurge in first marriages similar to that which followed World War I. There then commenced a period of more than two decades during which trend lines for males and females in Figure 1 are distinctly different.

From a peak post-war value of 1194 attained in 1946, the male index of total first marriages quickly dropped and was below 1000 in all but the first two years of the 1950s. By contrast the

decline in the female index after 1946 was much more sedate, with values comfortably above 1000 right through the 1950s. Then, with the female index finally hovering around the 1000 mark during the 1960s, the male index moved quite noticeably above that value during the latter two-thirds of the decade. The two measures were especially at variance during 1964-68.

These plainly different trends raise for consideration the notion of the balance between the sexes at those ages at which first marriages are most common. Discussions of the 'marriage squeeze' which adversely affected marriage prospects for females in the United States during the 1960s (Glick *et al.*, 1963) stimulated a debate on how best to measure this phenomenon which still continues (Akers, 1967; Muhsen, 1974; Goldman and Westoff, 1982; Schoen, 1983). A common simple ploy has been to compute ratios of marriageable males to marriageable females in age ranges considered to be the prime marrying ages for each sex. But this approach is both arbitrary and open to abuse, and does not readily accommodate change over time in the prime marrying ages (Spencer, 1971; Carmichael, 1982). A more satisfactory measure of the existence and severity of a marriage squeeze is in fact the difference between the male and female indexes of total first marriages.

This measure is plotted for Australia in Figure 2. Where the trend line moves above the dashed horizontal an excess of marriageable males implying a tight marriage market for that sex

is indicated; where it moves well below the dashed line females were experiencing a shortage of marriage partners. In the early 1920s females were competing for a pool of potential husbands depleted by 53900 deaths during World War I (Borrie, 1975). Their situation soon improved, however, as substantial net immigration added almost exactly two never married males to the population for every never married female during 1921-29. Such was the influx that in the latter half of the 1920s it was potential wives who were in short supply. This continued to be the situation more or less throughout the 1930s, although the severity of the sex imbalance was considerably reduced.

Figure 2 may mislead over much of the period during which World War II was in progress. This is because population estimates used to compute male indexes of total first marriages include Australian servicemen who were overseas and exclude Americans present in Australia. But whatever the true situation at this time war losses were not for long any sort of impediment to the marriage prospects of young Australian women. Underlying the sex differences in first marriage intensity during the 1950s and 1960s were an extremely tight marriage squeeze affecting males lasting from the late 1940s through until the early 1960s and a less severe, but still significant squeeze affecting female marriage prospects during the mid-1960s. The former was brought about principally by the massive influx of immigrants to Australia during the late 1940s and the 1950s (Price, 1971; Borrie, 1975). As in the 1920s, never married males heavily

outnumbered never married females, especially early on. During 1948-52 the sex ratio was over five males per female (McDonald, 1974), considerably exacerbating a situation which would in any case have been unfavourable to males. Females marrying at this time were drawn largely from the small birth cohorts of the early 1930s, whereas the slightly older males among whom they sought husbands were members of the larger cohorts of the late 1920s.

As the 1950s progressed immigration continued to be substantial, but the sex imbalance among never married migrants became less pronounced, favouring males by about two to one during 1953-56. The fact that throughout most of the period 1934-61 annual births rose in each successive year also began to affect the marriage market. Under these circumstances, and given that women tend to marry slightly older men, the number of native-born females reaching the main marrying ages in each year exceeded the number of native-born males doing so. After 1956 the excess of males among never married immigrants disappeared altogether to be replaced, during 1957-65, by a slight excess of females. Thus the differential size of succeeding birth cohorts became the predominant factor determining the state of the marriage market. It was most potent during the mid-1960s as females born immediately after World War II began seeking husbands born during the war years. But the female marriage squeeze of this period was bound to be alleviated quite quickly as males born during the baby boom, too, began marrying. The process was assisted by a sex ratio of 140 males per 100 females among the net intake of

never married migrants during 1966-71.

So far this discussion has concentrated on the intensity of first marriage activity during 1920-70 and on the periodic imbalances in the marriage market to which sex differences in intensity bear witness. It remains to present some period perspective on the timing of first marriages. Often this type of exercise relies on the median ages of males and females marrying for the first time in succeeding calendar years. A better approach, however, because it controls for changes in the age structure of the never married population (Spencer, 1971), is to compute ages at which the sums of age-specific first marriage ratios reach exactly half (and also one-quarter and three-quarters) of the values they ultimately attain as indexes of total first marriages.

Results of this exercise for Australia covering the period 1921-81 are shown in Figure 3. The tendency for males to marry several years later in life than females is readily evident. Less visally obvious is a second tendency for first marriages of males to occur over a broader age range than those of females (Table 2). Clearly age at first marriage declined for both sexes during 1921-31. Probably the major reason for this, especially later in the decade, was that in the prevailing social climate deferment of marriage in the face of depression was easier where the intended bride was not premaritally pregnant. The proportion of brides pregnant increased significantly over this period, and younger brides were considerably more likely to be pregnant than

older ones (Basavarajappa, 1968; Rusicka, 1975b). Thus deliberate deferment of marriage occurred more widely at older ages.

After 1931 deferred marriages began to take place, and in consequence ages at first marriage rose again (Spencer, 1969b). But from the mid to late 1930s renewed declines set in. These were to continue almost uninterrupted until the early 1970s, although the two lower trend lines for females in Figure 3 levelled off somewhat during the early and middle 1960s when potential husbands were in short supply. Declines were steepest through the 1940s. Through the 1950s and until the mid-1960s ages by which one-quarter and one-half of first marriages occurred for each sex fell noticeably less rapidly, but this transition is less pronounced with respect to ages by which three-quarters of first marriages occurred (Figure 3). This points to a compression of the age ranges within which first marriages were concentrated for each sex having taken place in conjunction with the declines in age at first marriage (Table 2).

Cohort Trends

While period measures have their value in the monitoring of demographic trends it is the cohort approach that places these trends in true life cycle perspective. In search of this realism Figures 4 and 5 show the numbers of females and males respectively per 1000 members of financial year birth cohorts

from 1899-1900 onward who had ever married on attaining specified birthdays. They are based on the method of reduced events, and to aid interpretation several time lines have been drawn. Cohort first marriage rates are shown to exact age 35 for females and to exact age 40 for males, by which ages the configurations of trend lines are good guides to changes in the extent of permanent bachelorhood and spinsterhood in succeeding generations.

Figures 4 and 5 both bear the imprint of depression during the early 1930s, even if it is little in evidence at younger ages where pregnancy would have precipitated many marriages. By and large, though, the effect of the Depression was temporary. Marriages were postponed, but in cohorts that were passing through the main marrying ages they were later made up. Figure 4 shows especially low proportions ever married by exact ages 20, 22, and 25 in the female cohorts born around 1914, 1912, and 1909 respectively, but by exact age 35 these cohorts had been absorbed into a longer run trend toward more universal marriage. Much the same pattern is evident for male birth cohorts (Figure 5). If the Depression caused any persons never to marry who otherwise would have done so it was only a relatively few individuals aged around 30 or older and still unmarried at the time who were affected.

Expanding on the trend toward more universal marriage, Figure 4 indicates a persistent increase in the proportion of females who ever married involving cohorts born between 1902-03 and 1933-34.

Less than 2 percent of women born during the latter financial year had not married by the time they turned 35 compared to over 19 percent of those born during the former year. Almost immediately, however, the trend reversed. It did so slowly and somewhat erratically early on, but the signs are that when women born during the early 1950s turn 35 some 10-12 percent will still be single. For later cohorts percentages will almost certainly be considerably higher.

Among males the trend toward more universal marriage occurred in two phases and did not result in an ultimate low in the proportion remaining permanently single until the cohort of 1939-40. The two phases embraced the birth cohorts of 1901-02 to 1919-20 and of 1928-29 to 1939-40. For intervening cohorts the extremely tight marriage market for males during the 1950s seems to have taken its toll. There being an abundance of younger men seeking wives from among a restricted supply of eligible females, some men who had probably hoped to marry in their late 20s or early 30s during this period seemingly failed to find partners. Moreover, though the marriage market improved sufficiently for successive male birth cohorts of the 1930s to marry more freely, no cohort ever achieved by age 40 anything like as low a level of singlehood as was recorded at age 35 by the 1933-34 female birth cohort.

The major changes that occurred in Australian marriage patterns during World War II are as striking in cohort perspective as they

were in period perspective. For both sexes the early 1940s brought substantial increments in the proportion married by exact age 25. From the birth cohort of 1914-15 to that of 1919-20 there were increases from 55.2 to 70.2 and from 31.6 to 46.1 in the percentages of females and males respectively married by that age. Some commentators have timed the marriage boom in Western nations as commencing in the 1930s. Given, however, that the upsurge in first marriage activity later in that decade to a considerable extent merely compensated for the downturn during the Depression, the commencement date of 1940 which McDonald (1974) has suggested for Australia seems reasonable.

After the War succeeding birth cohorts continued to marry more freely at younger ages. Again, however, the paths followed by trend lines show interesting differences between the experiences of the two sexes. In Figure 5 proportions of males ever married by ages 20, 22, and 25 are shown to have increased continuously along roughly straight line paths between birth cohorts intersected by the 1946 and 1973 time lines. But for females (Figure 4) the pattern at the same ages and at age 18 is one of rapid increase affecting birth cohorts passing through their 20s between the late 1940s and the mid-1950s, followed by little change affecting those marrying during the late 1950s and the 1960s. Once more the acute sex imbalance in the 1950s Australian marriage market is implicated. The intense competition for wives forced ages at first marriage for females down more quickly than is likely to have happened in its absence. How this competition

affected male ages at first marriage is rather more problematic. Some men were undoubtedly forced to marry later than they might have wished or not at all. But to the extent that there was any awareness that partners were in short supply there may have existed in some quarters an attitude that one should strive to marry as soon as possible.

The trend toward earlier marriage among birth cohorts is summarised more explicitly in Figure 6. This shows the ages by which one-quarter, one-half, and three-quarters of male first marriages taking place before age 40 and female first marriages taking place before age 35 were celebrated. The dashed (male) and solid (female) extensions to the main trend lines represent estimates for birth cohorts for which information is as yet marginally incomplete. They assume that 1981 male first marriage ratios at ages 33-39 and female first marriage ratios at ages 28-34 will be maintained over the ensuing few years. Error due to this assumption increases the more recent the birth cohort, and almost certainly estimates will ultimately prove to be slightly too low. The basic shapes of trend line extensions are, however, reliable.

The value of Figure 6 is that it confines study of the age distribution of first marriages to persons who did in fact marry in succeeding birth cohorts. There is thus no contamination due to changing proportions remaining permanently unmarried. Deferment of marriage by cohorts in their 20s during the early

1930s is plainly evident, but so is the temporary nature of the Depression's impact. Cohorts recording the oldest ages below which one-quarter and one-half of their first marriages took place later participated in downward trends in the ages below which one-half and three-quarters of first marriages occurred.

These downward trends initially represented a recovery to the pre-depression pattern of ages at first marriage. The early years of World War II then saw considerable progress made along the path of increasingly more youthful marriage which by and large characterised all cohorts born between about 1910 and the early 1950s. Progress was interrupted during the later war years, but affected cohorts were soon participating in the main trend again. After the War trends for the two sexes were initially quite similar. Then the marriage market became unbalanced. For cohorts born between 1925 and 1935 age at first marriage continued to decline rapidly for females, but only slowly and falteringly for males. As the balance within the marriage market reversed, females born during 1935-45 maintained an almost constant pattern of age at first marriage while males made up much of the ground they had lost. The trend to earlier marriage continued among males as birth cohorts of the late 1940s married, and was reestablished among females by these birth cohorts as well. The first sign of it ending in Figure 6 is the sharp upward turn in the estimated age by which three-quarters of female first marriages under age 35 will eventually prove to have taken place for birth cohorts of the early 1950s.

The tendency for decline in ages at first marriage to be accompanied by a narrowing of the age range within which such marriages were concentrated is apparent for birth cohorts as it was for period synthetic cohorts (Table 3). Although continuous for both sexes, the cohorts accounting for the bulk of the overall trend differed. Among males most change occurred between the cohorts of the 1900s and 1910s and again between those of the 1930s and the 1940s. Change among females occurred rather more between the cohorts of the 1910s and the 1930s, although it was not insignificant earlier than this. These differences indicate that the pace at which the age range of first marriages narrowed was essentially a function of the rapidity with which ages at first marriage declined.

One final aspect of the trends in first marriage patterns outlined warrants brief mention. With age at first marriage having declined at different rates for the two sexes and with the state of the marriage market having fluctuated wildly, some movement in the relative ages of marriage partners is likely to have occurred. In Table 4 percentages of brides marrying grooms four or more years older than themselves are shown for selected post-World War II marriage cohorts by age of bride. Declines in these percentages seem to have begun earliest at the very youngest bridal ages, perhaps reflecting an increasing tendency for premarital sexual activity to involve a male closer to one's own age. At the major marrying ages, however, declines occurred principally during the 1960s. On the evidence of Table 4 the age

difference between marriage partners changed relatively little at bridal ages 19-21 and rose slightly at ages 22-24 during the 1950s when males were overrepresented in the marriage market. But as the market changed and female ages at first marriage stabilised, men began taking brides closer to their own age.

Causes of the Marriage Boom

The foregoing detailed analysis of age at first marriage and proportions marrying in Australia during 1920-70 has largely avoided attempting to explain the trends observed. Certainly the impact of the severe sex imbalances in the marriage market during the 1950s and again in the mid-1960s has repeatedly been noted. But essentially these affected the trends toward earlier and more universal marriage in detail. What were the real causes of these trends?

During the marriage boom the concept of an economically appropriate time to marry, which Australia had inherited from Victorian England and found well suited to local conditions (Caldwell and Ruzicka, 1978), gave way to a much more carefree attitude under which a couple's feelings for one another largely determined age at marriage (McDonald, 1982). Strongly intertwined with this trend was a decline in the influence which parents exerted over courtship, mate selection, and the timing of marriage (Caldwell, 1982b). It might be argued that the demise of the 'proper time to marry' began with the Depression or even

earlier (Caldwell *et al.*, 1982), but at best any decline in age at first marriage over the first one-third of this century was extremely slow. It was World War II that really gave the process momentum, not that the significance of the War was widely recognised at the time. With the odd exception (Dyne, 1946) the glut of wartime marriages both in Australia and in other affected countries was assumed to be a temporary phenomenon. Marriage patterns would return to 'normal' after the inevitable immediate post-war marriage catch-up (Working Committee on the Decline in the Birth Rate, 1944; Hajnal, 1947; Borrie, 1948).

Several plausible explanations have been advanced for the wave of marriages in the early war years. McDonald (1974), citing a variety of sources, lists the avoidance of military service, the attraction of the man in uniform, the spirit of marrying 'now or never', the security of 'something to look forward to' when peace returned, the threat of spinsterhood arising from war losses, the prosperity induced by the War, the celebration of marriages postponed by the Depression, and the scope that existed for deferring the expense of setting up a home. From among these possibilities the most important factors probably were the advancing of marriages lest war prevent their taking place at all, the attraction for servicemen of the thought of a wife who would think of them, write to them, and wait for them, and the fact that marriage often had minimal immediate economic implications.

The Historical Dimension

Why did age at first marriage continue falling and the proportion of the population ever marrying continue rising for an extended period following World War II? Any full explanation must take into consideration the broad sweep of demographic history in Australia (Borrie, 1979). Certain trends which originated in the latter half of the nineteenth century created a climate conducive to change. They have been canvassed by Caldwell and Ruzicka (1978) and by Caldwell (1982b), and with respect to the marriage boom two that were interrelated stand out. The first was a dual movement toward greater egalitarianism and individualism in familial relations. It had, in Caldwell's view, both age, or intergenerational, and sex dimensions, each of these coming to the fore at different times. The second was a growing awareness of, acceptance of, and willingness to practise contraception, and a growing ability to practise it effectively.

Prior to World War II the first of these trends was dominated by 'a strengthening of relations between husbands and wives at the expense of relations between spouses and their own parents' (Caldwell, 1982b: 240). Caldwell sees two occurrences as having given special impetus to this process up until 1940: the establishment in all major states by 1880 of universal elementary schooling, and World War I. Compulsory education was a two-edged sword. It was to lead gradually, and later more rapidly, to increasing autonomy for the young in the parental home, and

naturally this autonomy was carried into marriage. But more importantly in the period to 1960, mass schooling provided targets for children with which their mothers could identify. Needing to compete with their husbands' goal-oriented world of paid employment, wives increasingly argued the primacy of their children's interests. They thereby forged 'a powerful weapon for weakening their husbands' bonds with their parents' (Caldwell, 1982b: 241).

The sheer magnitude of Australia's involvement in World War I and of the casualties sustained could hardly have meant other than a weakening of intergenerational links and a strengthening of those between age peers. Young people had to be accorded a measure of independence and naturally questioned the predictability of life. Depression in the early 1930s further eroded notions that one's life course could be pre-planned, and going back in time the feminism of the 1870s to 1890s should not be forgotten either. Though focused mainly on the political goal of obtaining the vote for women, the suffragette campaign was clearly a force for more egalitarian relations between spouses.

The history of contraception in Australia before 1940, and indeed before 1960, is not one of major advances in technology (Young and Ware, 1979; Caldwell, 1982a). Rather it is one of increasing awareness of, acceptance of, and capacity to effectively practise methods known for some time. There is substantial evidence that the trend toward widespread marital

contraception commenced in the 1880s (Caldwell, 1982a). It was linked quite early to the economic implications of compulsory schooling (Ackermann, 1913), was given a boost by the Suffragettes, owed much to improved inter-spouse communications since most available methods required considerable cooperation (Caldwell and Ruzicka, 1978), and was recognised to have significantly lowered the birth rate by the early 1900s (Coghlan, 1903; Royal Commission, 1904; Hicks, 1978). The intense 1890s depression hastened the adoption of birth control methods, albeit that two-fifths of fertility decline during this decade was achieved through postponements of marriage (Caldwell, 1982b).

World War I and the 1930s depression further accelerated the spread of contraception (Caldwell and Ruzicka, 1978). Evidence from the 1971 Melbourne Survey of the Department of Demography, Australian National University is that by the 1920s about half of all wives of reproductive age were in marriages where some kind of fertility control was attempted at some stage. Consistent use of contraception from the beginning of marriage probably first reached 50 percent in the marriage cohorts of the late 1930s (Caldwell and Ware, 1973; Young and Ware, 1979; Caldwell, 1982a).

The 1940s and 1950s

By the time World War II broke out, much groundwork for a sustained assault on the concept of a 'proper time to marry' had

been laid. The war itself was a major social upheaval, and as in World War I young people bore the brunt of the turmoil. The crucial role young men played on the battle fronts, their experience of getting away from home, and the contact young women had with the labour force (Ryan and Conlon, 1975; Beaton, 1982) were all decisive forces for greater generational independence. With war during early adulthood having followed depression during childhood and early adolescence, parents and grandparents could no longer plausibly argue that life followed a predictable course. Moreover, a generation of young men was prevented by the duration of the encounter from accumulating the supposed material prerequisites for marriage.

The legitimization of marital contraception continued apace through the 1940s. Melbourne Survey data show that among wives in their mid-20s the percentages practising birth control in 1935-39, 1940-44, and 1945-49 were respectively 45, 58, and 70 (Caldwell and Ruzicka, 1978). Ruzicka and Caldwell (1977: 34) have claimed that 'marriage trends in Australia probably can be understood only in terms of trends in fertility desires and contraceptive ability'. This statement represents an overly simple explanation for the decline in age at first marriage and the increase in proportions marrying during and after World War II. However, the significance of the fact that marriage cohorts of the late 1940s and the 1950s were the first to widely take for granted their right and ability to control their fertility should not be underestimated (McDonald, 1982). There is probably considerable

merit in Caldwell's (1982b) argument that earlier marriage was the major vehicle through which Australian youth sought to assert its independence during this period. Confidence that marriage would not condemn wives to a perpetual state of pregnancy undoubtedly helped to make this vehicle attractive.

Not that childbearing and parenthood were not themselves attractive prospects at this time. The baby boom is a phenomenon familiar to most. Period fertility measures give a false impression of the extent to which completed family size increased during 1945-60; they were substantially boosted by a decline in childlessness and change in the timing of childbearing associated with the marriage trends under review (Rusicka and Caldwell, 1977). But there can be no disputing that arising out of the deprivations of wartime, the late 1940s and the 1950s were a very familistic period. Friedan (1963: 16) characterised this era as one during which the idea that a woman's fulfilment existed in her being a healthy, attractive, educated wife and mother became 'the cherished and self-perpetuating core' of American culture. A similar image of matrimony and motherhood prevailed in Australia, and the Australian marriage market was tailor made for young women to pursue familistic goals.

The existence of a climate in which, on the one hand, marital contraception was widely accepted, and on the other, parenthood had acquired a special attraction was one foundation on which post-war youth built its quest for independence through early

marriage. The other was the prosperity of the period. Early attempts to explain the marriage boom relied almost exclusively on this circumstance (McDonald, 1974). Their ahistorical approach was clearly too simplistic, but readily available mortgage finance, low interest rates, and a very low level of unemployment obviously were conducive to the changes that occurred. According to the argument advanced by Easterlin (1962, 1973, 1976, 1980) for the United States, the relatively small size of generations marrying in the 1950s was an important factor determining the favourable economic climate for marriage and family formation at that time, the more so because the material aspirations of those generations reflected their rather frugal upbringing through two world crises.

One other generally overlooked factor impinging on age at first marriage is deserving of attention - premarital pregnancy. While Australian society in the early post-war years was certainly more secular than it had been in the mid-nineteenth century, the religiously based norm that marriage was the appropriate response to premarital pregnancy retained a strong hold. Estimates of the percentages of brides pregnant by single years of age prepared by Ruzicka (1976, 1977) and by Refshaug (1982) show sizeable increments through the 1950s and, at ages 16-21, on into the early 1960s for women married by their mid-20s. Higher percentages were recorded during 1925-35 (Ruzicka, 1975b), but owing to the much older age pattern of first marriages and to marriage postponement among non-pregnant women at this time

direct comparisons are misleading. The significance of the 1950s trend is that it coincided with the sharp movement toward an ever larger proportion of women marrying at ever younger ages.

Refshauge (1982) also produces annual single-year age-specific indexes of nonmarital pregnancy resulting in nuptial live births for the period 1921-78. These are more appropriate measures since they treat all unmarried women rather than just women who marry as the population at risk. They, too, show marked upward trends immediately following World War II, through the 1950s, and on into the early 1960s, finally peaking at levels which clearly exceed those of the 1920s and early 1930s by amounts inversely related to age at marriage. Numbers of females marrying pregnant and non-pregnant at ages in the range 16-24 years per 1000 members of birth cohorts attaining those ages during 1950-81 are plotted in Figure 7. In each graph the points marked on the horizontal axis correspond to the years 1950, 1960, 1970, and 1980. Quite clearly during the 1950s the increased incidence of first marriages at younger ages (particularly ages 16-20) was dominated by an upsurge in marriages involving pregnant brides.

It is impossible to assess quantitatively the contribution of premarital pregnancy to declines in age at first marriage for the simple reason that there is no knowing by what periods of time pregnant brides advanced their marriages on account of their pregnancies. At one extreme pregnancy will have been the sole reason for a marriage taking place at all; at the other extreme

it will have resulted from coitus in anticipation of an imminent and already scheduled marriage. In between lies the likely modal experience - one entailing an unplanned shortening of the courtship process.

The problem is insurmountable. Nonetheless one is inclined to concur with Refshauge (1982) that all the indications are that premarital pregnancy was a not insignificant factor in the continued decline in ages at first marriage in Australia after World War II. Underlying it, of course, were those forces that permitted increased sexual activity among the unmarried young. Mention has been made of the ever increasing extent to which post-war parents surrendered the capacity to influence their children's courting behaviour. Undoubtedly, as Caldwell (1982b) asserts, young people demanded greater autonomy. But in prosperous times their cause was aided by unprecedented access to motor vehicles. Cars provided both makeshift bedrooms and a mobility which ensured that intimacy could occur in total privacy. Earlier marriage was in part a direct consequence of a level of access to motor cars which no pre-war youth generation had enjoyed.

The 1960s and Early 1970s

Through the first two-thirds of the 1960s female ages at first marriage remained quite stable while male ages continued to decline. It is easy to see these differential trends as products

of marriage squeezes which had forced female ages at first marriage down especially quickly but retarded declines for males during the 1950s, and which then permitted males to make up lost ground during the early and middle 1960s. Why, though, was the female trend reasserted, and why did the male trend accelerate, in the late 1960s and early 1970s?

An interesting suggestion has been made by Withers (1979) who points out that during 1965-72 marriage was a means by which young men could avoid conscription for possible military service in Vietnam. The possibility that this was a contributing factor cannot be denied, but the statistically significant relationships Withers finds between the conscription rate and female first marriage rates at ages 16-20 and 21-25 may owe something to the coincidence of the National Service period with the period when oral contraception radically improved couples' ability to prevent pregnancy early in marriage. Along with the IUD, the pill represented the first major advance in contraceptive technology since the trend toward legitimising marital contraception commenced in the 1880s (Caldwell and Ware, 1973; Caldwell, 1982a).

First marketed in 1961, the pill offered the prospect of separating the decision to marry from that to become a parent in a way never previously possible (Rusicka and Choi, 1981). Accumulating the deposit for a home and the wherewithall to furnish that home could more assuredly be transferred from the

period of engagement to the early years of marriage. Establishing a career could proceed unhindered after marriage at a time when young women were becoming more career conscious. And with the sexual revolution having become firmly established, earlier marriage based on almost totally reliable contraception was the ideal solution for young couples wishing to reconcile pressures from their peers to lead active sex lives and from parents and others to uphold the morality based on premarital chastity. In short the pill rendered marriage more a licence for cohabitation and less a declaration of intent to become parents. The 1971 Melbourne Survey found that 41 percent of women married for less than three years were currently using oral contraception (Lavis, 1975).

Support for the arguments just advanced may be found in Table 5. This shows percentages of non-pregnant brides aged under 45 in marriage cohorts from 1950 onward who delivered their first children at specified durations of marriage, and cumulative percentages who had had their first child by succeeding wedding anniversaries. Through the 1950s and right up until 1961 around one-quarter of non-pregnant brides of reproductive age were mothers before they had been married a year, and almost one-third more achieved maternal status during the second year of marriage. Throughout this period the percentage distribution of non-pregnant brides by duration of marriage at first confinement remained remarkably stable. However, after 1961 percentages confined within the first and second years of marriage declined

persistently until 1976-77. Whereas only 43.2 percent of non-pregnant brides married in 1961 were still childless after two years, 74.5 percent of those married in 1976 fell into this category. In the early stages fewer confinements within the first two years of marriage were partly compensated by more in years three and four, but from 1967-68 percentages first confined at these marriage durations also turned downward. By the time non-pregnant brides of childbearing age who married in 1976 had been married four years, the percentage who had become mothers was still well below the equivalent figure after two years for the 1961 marriage cohort.

There has been a tendency to interpret the phenomenon just described as a widespread deferment of the first birth after marriage. Such an interpretation has unquestionable merit, but one can also argue that marriages were advanced relative to the intended date for the commencement of childbearing (Carmichael, 1982). That female ages at first marriage do not seem to have declined immediately the first birth interval for non-pregnant brides began widening probably reflects two things. First, the period concerned was that during which the marriage market was unfavourable to women, resulting in particular in a decline in numbers marrying non-pregnant at ages 18-20 (Figure 7). Second, it may have taken time before the potential offered by the pill for advancing marriage, as distinct from that for deferring parenthood, was recognised.

Reference to Figure 7 draws attention to an interesting contrast. Whereas during the 1950s the decline in female ages at first marriage was largely the product of more marriages of pregnant brides at younger ages, the resurgence of this trend in the late 1960s and early 1970s mainly involved more marriages at ages 17-20 in which pregnancy was not a factor. This is consistent with the argument that oral contraception allowed earlier marriage followed by a longer first birth interval, although it does not rule out the possibility that conscription influenced first marriage patterns.

Age at First Marriage and Proportions Marrying 1970-1982

During the 1970s the marriage boom well and truly ended. There was initially some reluctance to recognise that a major new phase in the history of marriage behaviour in Australia had commenced (Hall, 1976). As has already been noted, though, proportions of males and females never married at ages 20-24 and 25-29 began to increase again during the 1971-76 intercensal period (males aged 25-29 excepted), then rose sharply during 1976-81 (Table 1). At the very least these data demonstrate a significant movement toward older ages at marriage. Almost certainly they also reflect a growing disinclination to marry at all in a formal sense.

Period Trends

By 1970 male and female indexes of total first marriages were marginally above the level implying universal marriage if applied to a birth cohort (Figure 1). Thereafter they declined in almost linear fashion, both attaining minimum values in 1979 which implied that well over 30 percent of a birth cohort would never marry. Of course, just as a decline in age at first marriage can cause the index of total first marriages to take on 'impossibly' high values, so the reverse trend can cause it to assume unrealistically low values. During 1979-82 indexes have begun to rise again as marriages deferred earlier in the 1970s have finally taken place. As yet, however, the upward trends have been gentle, and they show signs of flattening off at levels which, if maintained for several years, would mean that perhaps a quarter of Australians now in their early twenties will never contract formal marriages.

In Figure 8 age-specific first marriage ratios by sex are plotted for selected ages in the main marrying ranges over the period 1966-81. The sums of these ratios and those for intervening and less popular ages at first marriage yield indexes of total first marriages. Similar patterns are evident for both sexes. At younger ages first marriage ratios increased during the latter half of the 1960s, then from around 1970 or 1971 in some cases, and 1974 in others, began to decline in trends which still persisted as of 1982. Delay in the commencement of concerted

downward movement at ages 18-20 is attributable to lowering of the age below which parental consent to marry was required from 21 years to 18 years in 1973. At older ages first marriage ratios declined throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, bottomed out during 1975-78, and have since trended upward.

Declining ratios at older ages through the late 1960s and early 1970s were obviously concomitants of the increasing ratios at younger ages. They may also to some extent reflect one or more of earlier improvement in nonmarital fertility control, earlier rejection of marriage as a response to premarital pregnancy, and earlier movement away from formal toward informal cohabiting unions at older ages. The more recent upturns in first marriage ratios at ages 24 and over for males and 22 and over for females are clearly due to the making up of marriages postponed at younger ages as an older age pattern of first marriages becomes established. Continued relatively steep declines in ratios at younger ages makes it likely that these upward trends will persist into the mid-1980s. As yet, however, they have not been anywhere near dramatic enough to compensate for the downward trends at younger ages through the mid-1970s, and it seems unlikely that this situation will change. Certainly some young people in the 1970s married later than they would have done had they been born a decade earlier. But others who would have married in the 1960s rejected marriage altogether in the 1970s.

The older period age patterns of first marriages which Figure 8

implies have developed for both sexes during the past decade are readily evident in Figure 3. Since 1974 the ages by which one-quarter, one-half, and three-quarters of first marriages have occurred in synthetic cohorts have risen steeply. For females the lower quartile and median ages had by 1981 clearly exceeded the respective 1951 ages, and the upper quartile age was close to its 1951 level. For males the reversals of previous downward trends were only marginally less dramatic, except in the case of the upper quartile age.

Cohort Trends

Ironically the most striking finding when more recent trends in cumulative first marriage rates for birth cohorts are examined (Figures 4 and 5) is the extent to which the downturn in first marriage activity has been a period phenomenon. Most trend lines at exact ages up to 25 years turn downward from the point where they intersect the 1:1:73 time line. The most notable exception is the female line at exact age 20, where the delayed response can be attributed to lowering of the age of majority in the Marriage Act. Another way of emphasising the period nature of the change is to note that whereas the 1955 female birth cohort recorded the highest first marriage rate to exact age 18 of any cohort to which Figure 4 relates, by the time it attained exact age 25 that same cohort had experienced around 130 fewer marriages per 1000 members than the cohorts with the highest first marriage rates at that age. This placed it on a par with

birth cohorts of the early 1920s.

A similar sort of observation could be made with respect to male birth cohorts of the early to mid-1950s. As yet, however, there is limited cohort evidence of an increase in ages at first marriage among persons who actually marry (Figure 6). It is only a matter of time before this emerges, and indeed the signs are already there in the third quartile trend line for females. The problem with Figure 6 is that one must wait for birth cohorts to approach ages 35 (females) and 40 (males) before their age patterns of first marriage can be estimated with reasonable precision. By and large the cohorts that have been passing through the main marrying ages during the past decade have yet to reach these ages.

McDonald (1982) presents a table showing ages by which one-quarter, one-half, and three-quarters of members of succeeding Australian birth cohorts had ever married. This permits coverage of more recent birth cohorts than are accommodated in Figure 6, and upward trends affecting the most recent cohorts for which data are available are apparent. The table does, however, have the potential to mislead, and almost certainly exaggerates changes in the age pattern of first marriages among those who do actually marry. The ages identified have been increasing partly because persons marrying have been doing so later and partly because marriage has more often been bypassed altogether. The significance of this last point is most easily grasped when it is

realised that over one-quarter of birth cohorts recently attaining marriageable age may never marry. In that event the age at which three-quarters of a cohort had married could not be calculated, and that age would rise rapidly for cohorts leading up to the one for which this first became a reality.

Explanations for Contemporary First Marriage Trends

A variety of explanations have been advanced for the trends toward older and almost certainly less universal marriage in Australia since the early 1970s. The trends began later than they did in North America and certain European countries (Caldwell *et al*, 1982), and the precise timing of their onset is of some importance in determining the emphasis to be placed on competing explanatory arguments.

The Timing of Change

Basing their case on a diagram similar to Figure 4 but showing trend lines at single-year intervals between exact ages 18 and 25, Caldwell *et al* (1982: 218) conclude that 'The proportions ever married by given ages seem to decline from about 1974 onwards'. This conclusion, however, relies heavily on trends at ages affected by the lowering of the age below which parental consent to marry was required. This occurred at an awkward time, but there is evidence in the diagram referred to and in another showing age-specific first marriage probabilities for birth

cohorts (Caldwell et al, 1982: Figure 2) that the beginnings of change can be discerned from 1972 onward.

An important exercise in resolving the question of when the downturn in first marriage activity began is to decompose female first marriage trends into components associated with pregnant and non-pregnant brides. Thus it is appropriate to focus once more on Figure 7. The critical ages here are ages 16-20, since as age at marriage increases trends in first marriage ratios are increasingly dictated by earlier trends at younger ages. Using the 30:6:71 time line as a reference point it is clear that numbers of young women marrying pregnant at ages 16-20 turned sharply downward from about this time if not a year or two earlier. At older ages (21-24 years) modest declines through the latter half of the 1960s accelerated noticeably. Numbers of young women marrying non-pregnant at ages 16-20 did not, however, begin to fall decisively until after mid-1974. Declines at ages 21-24 commenced earlier, but these were clearly in the early stages merely reverberations from increases at younger ages through the late 1960s.

Once again the lowering of the age of majority for marriage purposes must be kept in mind. Post-1971 peaks for non-pregnant brides at ages 18 and 19 in Figure 7 would certainly have been less pronounced had this legislative change not taken place. But there is still sufficient in Figure 7 to justify the conclusion that the decline in first marriage activity during the 1970s was

initiated by couples the female members of which were premaritally pregnant. Similar patterns have been observed for New Zealand (Carmichael, 1982) and for Sweden, France, England and Wales, and the Netherlands (Pasty, 1982).

Induced Abortion: The Trigger?

Decline in the rates at which succeeding female birth cohorts married pregnant after 1970 or 1971 implies that one or more of several things happened. The incidence of premarital pregnancy may have declined due to improved contraception, reduced sexual activity, or both. Marriages may less often have followed pregnancy, young women choosing instead to become single parents or to take their babies into de facto unions. Finally, pregnancies which in earlier times would have led to marriage may more frequently have been terminated by induced abortion. It is difficult to imagine that the level of premarital sexual activity declined significantly; indeed it seems more likely to have increased. While hard evidence is lacking (Siedlecky, 1979) an improvement in premarital contraception undoubtedly did occur, particularly in conjunction with a trend toward living together. Equally certainly the religiously based notion that marriage is the proper response to premarital pregnancy fell from favour. But given the timing, the magnitude, and the rapidity of the drop in marriages involving bridal pregnancy, improved access to abortion would seem to have been the critical factor.

South Australia, via the Criminal Law Consolidation Act Amendment Act 1969, was the first State to liberalise access to abortion. Of 9354 abortions performed during 1970-73 88.2 percent were carried out for psychiatric indications, and young single women were heavily overrepresented among abortion patients (Ruzicka, 1975a). However, with a two month residency requirement largely precluding movement interstate in search of terminations and with less than 10 percent of Australians living in South Australia, the implications for national marriage patterns were necessarily limited. In Victoria the 1969 Menhennitt ruling in R. v. Davidson placed a more liberal interpretation on sections 65 and 66 of the Crimes Act 1958, but left unclear whether a woman's social and economic circumstances were relevant to establishing danger to her life or physical or mental health (Royal Commission on Human Relationships, 1977). The later Levine judgement in R. v. Wald and Others in New South Wales in 1972 was more specific on this issue, and from a national perspective was perhaps the crucial event permitting more widespread resort to abortion as a method of fertility control.

There are no national statistics on abortion. The Royal Commission on Human Relationships (1977: 195) estimated that 'over 60000 abortions per year' were carried out in Australia in the mid-1970s, but save for South Australia (Ruzicka, 1975a; Yusuf and Briggs, 1979; Refshaug, 1982) there are no trend data. That increases in both the total number of abortions and the number performed on never married women through the 1970s

were large cannot, however, be doubted. Moreover, having reviewed a range of evidence the Royal Commission on Human Relationships (1977: 199-200) concluded that 'About 30 per cent of all abortions occur to women under the age of 20 whereas this group accounts for only 10-11 per cent of live births'; that 'about half of women having abortions are single'; and that 'Between 40 and 50 per cent of women having abortions have not had any children'. The Sydney study of Snyder and Wall (1976) further made the pertinent finding that 67.3 percent of 640 respondents pregnant by someone other than a legal spouse described their partner as a steady boyfriend (48.6 percent), fiancé (8.7 percent), or cohabitant (10.0 percent). This suggests a determination to avoid unplanned parenthood even in relatively committed relationships.

There can be no suggestion that freer access to abortion caused the changes in marriage behaviour during the 1970s. What can be argued is that it released forces for change that had been building up during the 1960s, and that were subsequently to strengthen and be reinforced by new forces in the 1970s. It is interesting to speculate on the ideological significance of the abortion phenomenon in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Did young people who 'avoided' marriage through abortion directly influence the attitudes of their peers? And what was the impact of the widespread public debate on abortion at this time? It was a debate that fostered numerous opinion polls showing substantial disagreement with the religious view that abortion was wrong.

These findings probably convinced many young people that other aspects of religious morality could be discarded, notably prohibitions against premarital coitus and against living together, and the guilt associated with breaches of these rules. They assisted the young suddenly to articulate more coherently a moral code that had been evolving throughout the post-war period.

Living Together

As just intimated, the ingredients for an attack on marriage as traditionally constituted had been building up for some time. The spread of feminist ideology, extension of the period devoted to formal education, women's increased career consciousness and economic independence, a decline in religious observance, and dislike for the furtive, guilt-ridden nature of much premarital sexual activity were all important. With the pill making it possible to avoid pregnancy indefinitely, and with a divorce rate which rose steadily through the 1960s and early 1970s revealing marriage to be a very fragile institution (Institute of Family Studies, forthcoming), it was only a matter of time before some young people queried the sense of marrying without first testing a relationship. Living together was a logical next step once the early-years of marriage had become childless. Other young people doubtless became sceptical of the relevance of legal and religious rites to their relationships (Caldwell, 1980), while still others simply saw marriage as no competitor with a lifestyle offering both regular sex and complete personal

freedom.

The abortion debate probably helped crystallise these attitudes to the point where they were perceived as widely held among peers, and thus as appropriate principles on which to base one's own behaviour. Distinctions between premarital and postmarital lifestyles had been eroding for some time. Once marriage had been associated with departure from the parental home, initiation of a (regular) sex life, and the transition to parenthood. By the early mid-1970s it had been substantially stripped of these meanings and was thus not the pivotal event it had been in the life cycles of earlier generations (Carmichael, 1982). Divorcing marriage from the commencement of cohabitation was merely one further stage in this process.

Whatever initiated it, the trend toward living together was partly facilitated by a changed relationship between young people and their parents. There were perhaps two sides to this. First, generational conflict during the 1960s, spanning such diverse issues as the Vietnam War and men's hairstyles, saw the young acquire an unprecedented independence from parental authority. Second, parents perhaps became more tolerant of their children working out their own lifestyles in accordance with the technology and social realities of their day. Parents whose children were of prime marrying age in the early 1970s had for the most part married themselves in the first decade post-war. In rejecting the 'proper time to marry' they had argued with

their own parents that what was sensible for one generation in such matters was not necessarily so for the next.

It is impossible to estimate the extent to which the movements away from formal marriage and toward marriage at older ages in the 1970s represent merely a growing preference for informal over formal cohabiting unions. As in other countries (Cotton *et al*, 1983), time series on the incidence of cohabitation are not available. Data from a 1977 Department of Demography, Australian National University survey of 493 recently married, still married Melbourne women show that 8.0, 17.6, and 23.8 percent of those married in 1968-70, 1971-73, and 1974-77 respectively lived with their husbands before marriage (Carmichael, 1982). These figures exaggerate the upward trend if, as Newcomb and Bentler (1980) found, marriages of cohabitators were more prone to dissolution. Moreover, cohabiting unions which lead to marriage are but a subset of all such unions. Nevertheless, that living together became much more common during the 1970s is beyond dispute.

Certainly the 1981-82 IFS Survey of 18-34 year-olds, echoing the findings of Hasleton (1975), found substantial acceptance of living together arrangements. Some 55 percent of females and 62 percent of males agreed that 'It is good to have a trial marriage'. Percentages agreeing that 'It is alright for a couple to live together without planning to get married' were even higher - 76 for females and 81 for males. Only 40 percent of males and 50 percent of females saw no advantages in living

together over formal marriage. Likewise only 40 percent of males and 47 percent of females felt that 'If you live together there is a lot of social disapproval', and these figures drop considerably if those who themselves disapproved are eliminated. Living together relationships were widely perceived as 'easier to get out of' than marital unions - 78 percent of males and 76 percent of females felt that this was so. Substantial bodies of opinion also agreed that 'There is a lack of personal security when you live together' (42 percent of males; 54 percent of females) and that 'You have problems if there are children when you live together' (69 percent of males; 77 percent of females). These statements were, however, less frequently concurred with by never married persons currently in de facto unions (15 and 19 percent of males and females on security; 51 and 60 percent on children) and by married persons with living together experience (34 and 52 percent; 59 and 75 percent) than by married persons acknowledging no living together relationship (54 and 65 percent; 78 and 86 percent).

Economic Forces

McDonald (1982: 190) argues that the 1970s in Australia saw 'a strong return to the ethic of the proper time to marry of the nineteenth century'. He sees the contemporary version of this ethic as having both economic and psychological dimensions, the former requiring that there be sufficient savings to commence married life 'in a substantial, well-furnished house' and the

latter requiring deferment of marriage until one's personality is fully developed 'through travel, career and freedom of relationship with a broad range of people'. Caldwell et al (1982: 223) also place considerable emphasis on 'the massive increases in unemployment for young people since 1974' in explaining the decline in marriages at younger ages. One has the feeling, though, that unemployment can easily be accorded too great and too direct a role in the explanation of recent first marriage trends.

One is sceptical of the suggestion that material standard of living following marriage has again become all important in determining the timing of marriage. Naturally with marriage occurring later in life and often after a period spent living together today's newly weds are likely to be financially better off. But that does not establish that decisions to marry are now made with a greater conscious regard for the economic resources a couple can muster than was the case a decade ago.

On the role of rising unemployment, it certainly is true that marked upward movement in youth and young adult unemployment rates coincided closely with the onset of rapid decline in rates at which young women married non-pregnant after 1974 (Figure 7). Unemployment rates for males and females respectively rose from 5.0 to 10.8 and from 6.7 to 15.1 percent at ages 15-19, and from 2.9 to 5.2 and from 3.6 to 6.9 percent at ages 20-24 between August 1974 and August 1975 (Australian Bureau of Statistics,

1980). Conceivably some young people deferred marriage specifically because they were unemployed or felt insecure in their employment, while the reality of unemployment may have impaired the ability of others to form serious relationships. A possibly more significant impact of unemployment on first marriage rates, however, has been through impetus it has given to general feelings of insecurity and uncertainty as to the future. Far more than previous post-war generations, young people of the late 1970s and early 1980s have been preoccupied with finding and retaining jobs.

Arguably the most potent economic force for deferment and rejection of formal marriage has been largely ignored in accounts of those trends to date. Home ownership has long been a cherished goal in Australia, yet during the 1970s prospects for young couples attaining this goal deteriorated rapidly (Kilmartin and Thorns, 1978). The cost of an average new 110 square metre house increased from \$26200 to \$50000, from \$17400 to \$40200, and from \$15400 to \$34100 in Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide respectively during 1972-78, and these figures had risen further to \$88620, \$56100, and \$37200 by 1981. The mean price of an established house rose in Melbourne from \$14800 in 1972 to \$42320 in 1978 and \$53820 in 1981, and in Sydney and Adelaide from \$44700 to \$76670 and from \$35980 to \$42820 during 1978-81 (Burke et al., forthcoming). For a single income household on average weekly earnings the deposit required to purchase an average house with a 25 year savings bank loan rose, in Melbourne, from \$3700

(25 percent of purchase price) in 1971 to \$18280 (44 percent) in 1976 and \$21820 (41 percent) in 1981, and in Sydney from \$15700 (35 percent) in 1978 to \$44670 (58 percent) in 1981. Deposits required by dual income households were lower (\$3700, \$4280, and \$13450 in Melbourne; \$7700 and \$30670 in Sydney at the same dates assuming a household income 50 percent above average weekly earnings) (Burke et al., forthcoming), but of course in utilising their higher borrowing capacity dual income households tended to acquire dual income repayments liabilities.

To the statistics just quoted must be added the upsurge in home loan interest rates over the last decade and a rapid rise in the cost of rental housing which has affected ability to save toward home purchase. In Melbourne and Sydney the median rents of advertised properties increased by 75 and 102 percent during 1976-81, as against 64 and 65 percent increases in average weekly earnings (Burke et al., forthcoming). Quite clearly saving the deposit for a home and meeting the repayments on a home loan became much more difficult during the 1970s. They were not made any easier for some couples by unemployment or the threat thereof. Given the young ages at which it was taking place, marriage rapidly lost its link with another of the life cycle transitions which previously had made it a momentous event - that to the status of home owner. For some young couples later marriage was the answer, not because they were more concerned than couples in the 1960s with their standard of housing after marriage but because accumulating the necessary resources took

longer. For others financing a home either became impossible or else required too great a sacrifice in lifestyle.

Ideological Change

Permeating much of this discussion of first marriage trends in the 1970s has been the notion that attitudes to and bearing on marriage have changed considerably. There can be little doubt that the institution of marriage itself has been subjected to close scrutiny. In some quarters formal, registered marriage has been rejected as irrelevant, as unnecessarily complicating the ending of a relationship should the need arise, as incompatible with individualistic aspirations, and because it arouses images of inequality, stereotyped roles, and lack of personal freedom. For others making a formal commitment to a partner is still an attractive concept, but compared to the 1960s greater care is taken in the selection of that partner, different principles are expected to govern domestic life after marriage, and there is greater concern that the event not occur until, as McDonald (1982) terms it, the 'psychologically proper' time.

Several forces have contributed to this reappraisal of marriage. Traditional attitudes to marriage are largely religiously based, and there is little dispute that the influence of the Church over the lives of young Australians has diminished significantly since World War II. In the 1981-82 IFS Survey of 18-34 year-olds, only 18.5 percent attended religious services at least once a month.

The sexual revolution has also been important, for as it pitched more and more couples into hasty marriages and as flouting of the principle of premarital chastity became more widespread, reevaluation of the basis on which decisions to marry should be made and of the necessity of marriage as a setting for coitus became inevitable. Another factor would seem from casual observation to have been a more individualistic outlook on life among Australian youth, while a rising divorce rate has also caused marriage to be approached more circumspectly. The possible role of the abortion debate of the late 1960s and early 1970s has been discussed, but almost certainly the key change has been that in women's attitudes and life cycle priorities. This has developed out of the 'silent revolution' in married female labour force participation (Caldwell, 1982b), the contraceptive revolution of the 1960s, and the influence which the Women's Movement has been able to exert given these two eventualities.

Comparison of responses to comparable attitude items by 18-34 year-old Melbourne women currently in their first marriages from the 1971 Melbourne Survey (N=1135) and the 1981-82 IFS Survey (N=96) provides some illuminating insights into changes in female attitudes (Gleser, 1983). Several items point clearly to wider adherence to a more egalitarian, role sharing model of marriage. Percentages agreeing with the statements that 'Important decisions should be made by the husband', that 'Husbands should regularly help with the housework', and that 'A wife should go where her husband wants her to go for his job' respectively

declined from 44 to 14, rose from 63 to 85, and declined from 85 to 62. Motherhood had by the early 1980s become much less central in married women's lives: percentages agreeing that 'A woman is only fulfilled when she becomes a mother' and that 'Whatever career a woman may have her most important role in life is still that of becoming a mother' had fallen from 68 to 28 and from 78 to 45. On the other hand careers had become more important, with only 44 percent agreeing that 'Wives who don't have to work should not do so' compared to 62 percent in 1971. Finally, the percentage agreeing that 'People who don't want promotion in their jobs are weak' dropped from 52 to 23, suggesting that the balance between the importance husbands are expected to attach to domestic relations and to their employment has changed. All but one of these attitude shifts are statistically significant at the .001 level. That pertaining to wives' employment is significant at the .01 level.

Obviously young married women in the early 1980s had different expectations of marriage than did their counterparts in the early 1970s. A greater concern with sharing and equality in marriage, stronger career orientation, and the likelihood that the diminished importance of motherhood means that the quality of the marital relationship has become more important are all consistent with a more careful approach to decisions to marry.

Conclusion - Where is Marriage Headed?

Alarmist statements about the future of marriage and of family life have been commonplace in recent years. So far as marriage is concerned, perhaps the main message from the present analysis is that Australian young people have been approaching it more circumspectly. It is still too early to be certain of the extent to which the trends of the past decade represent, on the one hand, movement toward an older age pattern of first marriage, and on the other, rejection of formal marriage. Marriage remains extremely popular, but having said that it would not surprise if a fifth to a quarter of both male and female birth cohorts of the 1960s ultimately never marry. First marriage ratios at ages 22 and over for females and ages 24 and over for males are currently rising again. Only time will tell how far these trends will go toward compensating for earlier declines at these ages and continuing declines at younger ages.

Attitude data from the 1981-82 IPS Survey offer both positive and negative signs concerning the future of marriage. Some 86 and 85 percent of male and female 18-34 year-olds agreed that 'Marriage provides love, warmth and happiness', these figures dropping for both sexes to 80 percent for single persons. Reasonably low percentages of respondents saw marriage interfering with one's independence or personal freedom (34 percent of males; 29 percent of females), although the figure for single males (39 percent) was a little higher. Clear majorities of both sexes

agreed that 'Marriage is for life' (76 percent of males; 75 percent of females) and that 'Marriage develops a sense of responsibility in you that you wouldn't have otherwise' (81 percent of males; 74 percent of females). However, there was by no means overwhelming acceptance of the statement that 'Married people are happier than people who go through life without getting married'. Just 48 percent of males and 35 percent of females agreed that this was so, and at 41 and 30 percent agreement among single respondents was even lower. Perhaps even more sinister were the sizeable minorities who felt that 'People take one another for granted when they are married' (48 percent of males; 44 percent of females) and that 'There are few happy marriages these days' (39 percent of males; 44 percent of females). Another interesting finding was a statistically significant sex difference in agreement with the proposition 'People should consider the needs of their spouse and children as more important than their own'. While 78 percent of males felt that this was so only 57 percent of females felt likewise, the figures for single respondents being similar. This difference may have particular significance for marital stability, but in the short term at least it could also mean that women will have difficulty finding males whose attitudes are those that they seek in a marriage partner.

A plausible hypothesis that has been advanced of late is that age at marriage is becoming more closely tied again to the commencement of childbearing. According to this argument the

decision to have a child is acquiring the status of a final mark of commitment between cohabiting partners, with marriage taking place either in anticipation of pregnancy or shortly after it occurs. As yet, however, there is limited evidence to support this theory. Figure 7 shows slight increases in proportions marrying pregnant at ages 20-24 for the most recent female birth cohorts to attain those ages, and data for older ages (not presented) are no more striking. Likewise Table 5 shows the beginnings of a tendency for the interval between marriage and the first birth to close again for non-pregnant brides, but to date it is not sufficiently strong to suggest widespread linking of decisions to marry and to have children. It is nonetheless possible that such a phenomenon will become discernible over the next few years.

A crucial unknown so far as the future of formal marriage in Australia is concerned is, of course, the future status of living together relationships. Will they become more common than they are already? One is inclined to agree with Cunningham and Antill (1979) that they will. Will they increasingly become substitutes for marriage rather than merely preludes to marriage? Barring a major increase in voluntary childlessness such a trend would presumably require that consensual unions be regarded more and more as appropriate settings in which to raise children. Although it has been shown that significant proportions of respondents to the 1981-82 IFS Survey, even of those currently living in de facto relationships, saw problems arising for

couples who have children while living together, 58 percent of males and 51 percent of females agreed that 'it is alright for people to have children without being married'. One indication that childbearing was becoming more common in living together relationships might be if the ex-nuptial component of Refshaug's (1982) index of nonmarital pregnancy were to begin rising again, especially for women in their 20s. The most recently available data do hint at such a trend (Ruzicka, 1983), and the extent of its development over the next few years bears careful monitoring.

Legislative initiatives could hasten any tendency for living together to become a substitute for formal marriage. The law on family and domestic relationships in New South Wales as it pertains to de facto unions has recently been reviewed (New South Wales Law Reform Commission, 1983). Should changes be made to the law in this or any other state which substantially equated living together and marital relationships, one likely consequence is that formal marriage ceremonies would be perceived as irrelevant even more widely than they are now.

A final factor to be considered is the possible impact of substantial improvement in Australia's economic fortunes. Assuming no unforeseen resurgence of religious fervour this would seem the only possible basis for significant reversal of the marriage trends of the past decade. Major reductions in present levels of unemployment among the young just might bring about an increase in first marriage activity. It is harder to see home

ownership again becoming remotely as attainable a goal as it was for the parents of today's youth. But even supposing that it did, the ideological changes bearing on marriage of the 1970s would probably limit any response in the form either of increased proportions marrying or of marriage at younger ages.

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Table 1

PERCENTAGES NEVER MARRIED AT SUCCESSIVE CENSUSES 1921-1981
BY AGE AND SEX

Age Group	Census Year								
	1921	1933	1947	1954	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981
Males									
15-19	99.6	99.6	99.3	99.2	99.1	98.7	98.6	98.9	99.4
20-24	85.4	87.2	76.5	74.5	72.8	70.0	63.9	66.7	77.4
25-29	52.2	56.1	37.9	36.5	33.2	29.3	25.7	25.5	34.8
30-34	31.4	32.6	21.7	19.6	19.2	16.2	13.9	13.0	15.5
35-39	23.1	21.3	16.4	14.0	13.3	12.7	10.9	9.5	10.1
40-44	20.3	16.3	14.5	12.4	10.9	10.6	10.0	8.7	8.2
45-49	19.7	14.7	13.9	11.6	10.0	9.5	9.0	8.8	8.1
Females									
15-19	96.4	96.1	94.4	93.1	93.0	91.8	91.2	92.7	95.7
20-24	66.4	68.0	51.4	41.0	39.5	40.3	35.7	40.1	54.5
25-29	36.5	37.6	21.0	15.0	12.4	12.2	11.6	13.1	19.1
30-34	23.8	22.5	13.8	9.6	7.7	6.8	6.5	7.0	8.4
35-39	18.9	17.0	12.6	8.6	6.5	5.6	5.0	5.1	5.4
40-44	17.7	15.1	12.9	9.2	6.6	5.4	4.8	4.5	4.4
45-49	16.6	14.3	12.6	10.4	7.4	5.9	4.9	4.6	4.1

Source: Census Reports.

Table 2

MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AGES BY WHICH ONE-QUARTER AND
THREE-QUARTERS OF FIRST MARRIAGES TOOK PLACE IN
PERIOD SYNTHETIC COHORTS: 1921-30 TO 1971-80 BY SEX

Period	Males	Females
1921-30	7.52	6.33
1931-40	7.12	6.23
1941-50	7.08	5.60
1951-60	5.97	4.55
1961-70	5.34	4.09
1971-80	5.26	4.25

Source: Demography Bulletin and
Marriages Australia,
various annual volumes;
ANU Demographic Databank.

Table 3

MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AGES BY WHICH ONE-QUARTER AND
THREE-QUARTERS OF ~~1900~~ FIRST MARRIAGES AT AGES UNDER
40 AND FEMALE FIRST MARRIAGES AT AGES UNDER 35 HAD
TAKEN PLACE: 10-YEAR BIRTH COHORTS

Birth Cohort	Males	Females
1899-1900 to 1908-09	6.83	5.55
1909-10 to 1918-19	5.42	5.01
1919-20 to 1928-29	5.06	4.13
1929-30 to 1938-39	4.93	3.79
1939-40 to 1948-49	4.24	3.65

Source: Demography Bulletin and Marriages
Australia, various annual volumes;
ANU Demographic Databank.

Table 4

PERCENTAGES OF BRIDES MARRYING GROOMS FOUR OR MORE YEARS
OLDER BY AGE OF BRIDE: SELECTED MARRIAGE COHORTS

Marriage Cohort	Age of Bride								
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1946	74.5	70.0	56.9	51.8	43.6	38.2	34.4	33.4	32.9
1949	71.5	66.0	60.1	53.0	44.6	38.0	34.0	33.2	31.5
1952	72.1	67.6	57.1	51.0	43.4	36.8	33.5	31.5	31.9
1955	69.6	65.0	58.3	51.8	44.6	39.4	35.2	33.9	33.8
1958	63.7	60.7	54.7	48.1	43.5	38.3	37.5	37.6	37.9
1961	60.7	54.6	51.3	47.5	41.1	36.0	33.6	36.1	35.3
1964	59.0	50.4	49.1	45.4	38.5	35.5	32.6	33.8	35.2
1967	55.2	42.9	40.7	39.0	32.6	31.1	29.3	29.0	30.0
1970	55.3	44.5	41.3	36.0	29.0	26.0	24.6	26.3	27.8
1973	54.7	46.3	41.7	34.8	28.7	27.5	26.6	25.6	28.1
1976	60.3	49.6	42.3	34.5	31.0	29.8	30.0	31.8	33.5
1979	63.0	52.5	46.5	37.9	33.2	31.3	30.8	32.1	34.1
1982	68.5	54.8	48.7	41.5	35.5	32.0	31.5	31.8	32.4

Source: Demography Bulletin and Marriages Australia, various annual volumes.

Note: Age differences were determined by subtracting age of bride in completed years from age of groom in completed years. If the result of such a subtraction is x years, the true age difference may be anything from just over $x-1$ years to almost $x+1$ years.

Table 5

PERCENTAGES OF NON-PREGNANT BRIDES AGED UNDER 45 YEARS FIRST
GIVING BIRTH AT SELECTED MARRIAGE DURATIONS AND CUMULATIVE
PERCENTAGES FIRST GIVING BIRTH BY SELECTED EXACT MARRIAGE
DURATIONS: 1950-1981 MARRIAGE COHORTS

Marriage Cohort	Marriage Duration (years)					
	0	1	2	3	4	5-9
1950	22.3	31.5	13.5	7.3	4.4	7.4
1951	22.7	30.6	12.9	7.0	4.3	7.2
1952	23.0	30.4	13.0	7.1	4.4	7.3
1953	23.5	31.1	13.5	7.6	4.5	7.6
1954	23.7	31.1	13.7	7.7	4.5	7.7
1955	24.3	32.0	13.8	7.6	4.6	7.8
1956	25.3	33.1	14.1	7.7	4.8	7.9
1957	25.0	32.0	13.3	7.6	4.6	7.5
1958	25.6	32.1	13.2	7.5	4.5	7.3
1959	25.7	32.7	13.5	7.5	4.6	7.2
1960	26.6	32.6	13.7	7.7	4.7	7.4
1961	25.2	31.6	14.1	8.1	5.1	7.8
1962	23.5	30.3	14.9	8.9	5.4	8.0
1963	20.9	29.7	16.3	10.1	6.1	8.7
1964	18.2	28.6	17.1	10.9	6.8	9.0
1965	15.9	27.0	17.5	11.5	7.0	9.1
1966	14.9	26.9	18.5	12.2	7.5	9.4
1967	14.1	26.8	18.6	12.6	7.6	9.5
1968	12.6	26.3	19.2	12.8	7.4	9.9
1969	11.6	25.8	18.9	12.5	7.5	10.6
1970	11.2	25.2	17.8	12.6	8.0	11.6
1971	9.7	22.9	17.6	12.5	8.0	12.6
1972	8.9	22.2	17.4	12.3	8.4	13.8
1973	8.6	21.6	16.3	12.0	8.5	
1974	8.1	20.2	15.6	11.8	8.5	
1975	7.6	20.0	15.4	11.7	8.8	
1976	7.2	18.3	14.0	10.9	8.2	
1977	7.1	18.5	14.4	11.3	8.4	
1978	7.2	19.1	14.8	11.3		
1979	7.2	19.9	15.1			
1980	7.4	20.1				
1981	7.6					

Table 5 continued

Marriage Cohort	Exact Marriage Duration (years)					
	1	2	3	4	5	10
1950	22.3	53.8	67.3	74.6	79.0	86.3
1951	22.7	53.2	66.2	73.1	77.4	84.6
1952	23.0	53.4	66.4	73.5	78.0	85.3
1953	23.5	54.6	68.1	75.7	80.2	87.8
1954	23.7	54.8	68.5	76.2	80.7	88.4
1955	24.3	56.3	70.1	77.7	82.3	90.1
1956	25.3	58.3	72.4	80.1	84.9	92.8
1957	25.0	57.0	70.3	77.9	82.5	90.0
1958	25.6	57.6	70.9	78.4	82.9	90.2
1959	25.7	58.4	71.9	79.4	84.0	91.3
1960	26.6	59.2	72.9	80.6	85.3	92.8
1961	25.2	56.8	70.9	79.1	84.1	91.9
1962	23.5	53.7	68.6	77.6	83.0	91.0
1963	20.9	50.5	66.8	76.9	83.0	91.7
1964	18.2	46.8	63.8	74.8	81.6	90.6
1965	15.9	42.9	60.4	72.0	79.0	88.1
1966	14.9	41.8	60.3	72.5	80.0	89.4
1967	14.1	40.9	59.6	72.2	79.8	89.2
1968	12.6	38.9	58.1	70.9	78.3	88.2
1969	11.6	37.4	56.3	68.8	76.4	87.0
1970	11.2	36.4	54.2	66.8	74.7	86.3
1971	9.7	32.7	50.3	62.8	70.8	83.3
1972	8.9	31.0	48.4	60.8	69.2	83.0
1973	8.6	30.1	46.4	58.4	67.0	
1974	8.1	28.3	43.9	55.7	64.1	
1975	7.6	27.6	43.0	54.8	63.6	
1976	7.2	25.5	39.5	50.4	58.6	
1977	7.1	25.6	40.0	51.3	59.7	
1978	7.2	26.3	41.1	52.4		
1979	7.2	27.1	42.2			
1980	7.4	27.5				
1981	7.6					

Source: Demography Bulletin and Marriages Australia, various annual volumes.

Figure 1

INDEX OF TOTAL FIRST MARRIAGES BY SEX: AUSTRALIA 1921-1992

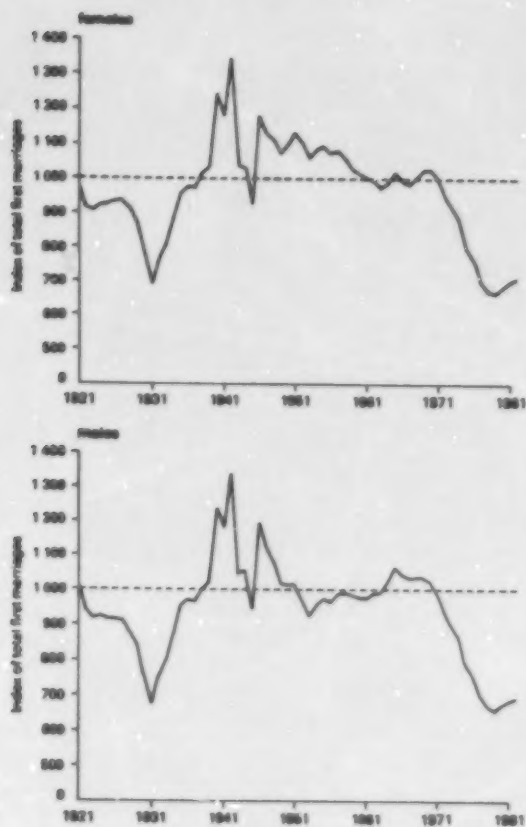


Figure 2

FEMALE INDEX OF TOTAL FIRST MARRIAGES MINUS MALE INDEX OF
TOTAL FIRST MARRIAGES: AUSTRALIA 1921-1981

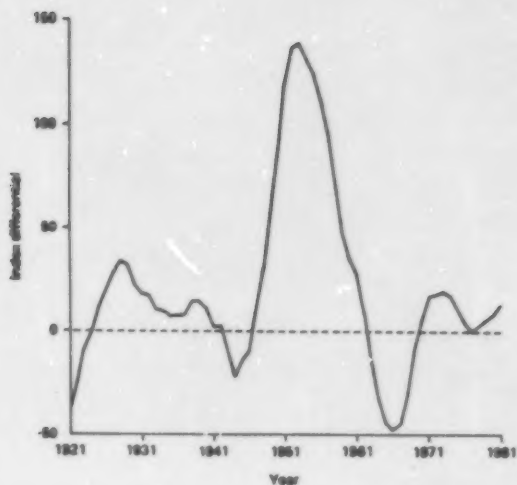


Figure 3

AGES BY WHICH ONE-QUARTER, ONE-HALF AND THREE-QUARTERS OF
FIRST MARRIAGES TOOK PLACE: SYNTHETIC FIRST MARRIAGE
COHORTS BY SEX 1921-1981

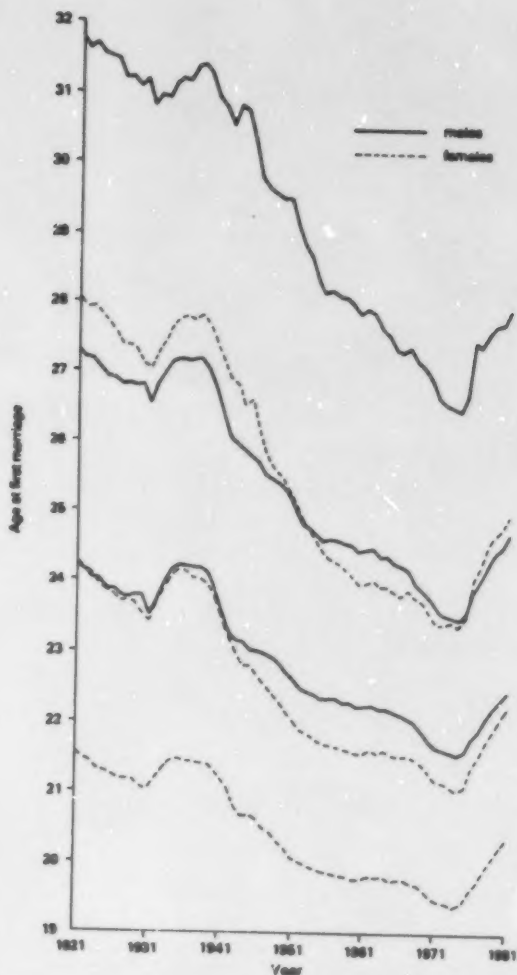


Figure 4

CUMULATIVE NUMBERS OF FEMALES (PER 1000) EVER MARRIED
BY SELECTED EXACT AGES: 1899-1900 TO 1963-64
BIRTH COHORTS

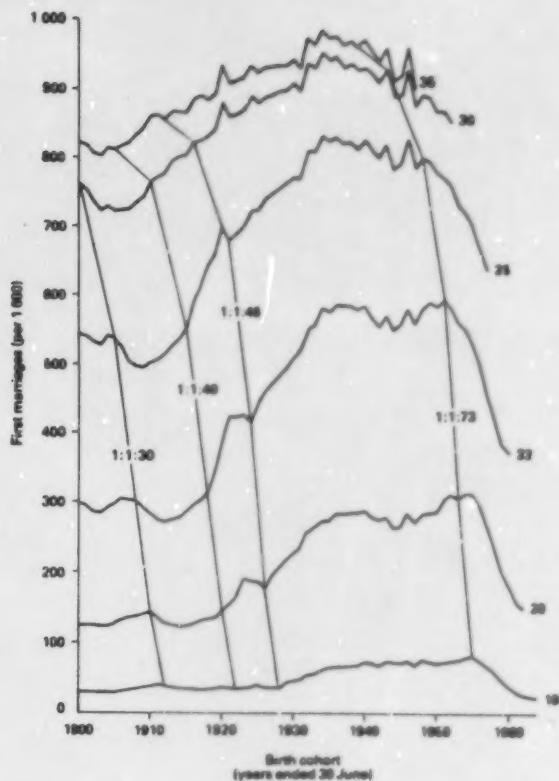


Figure 5

CUMULATIVE NUMBERS OF MALES (PER 1000) EVER MARRIED
BY SELECTED EXACT AGES: 1899-1900 TO 1961-62
BIRTH COHORTS

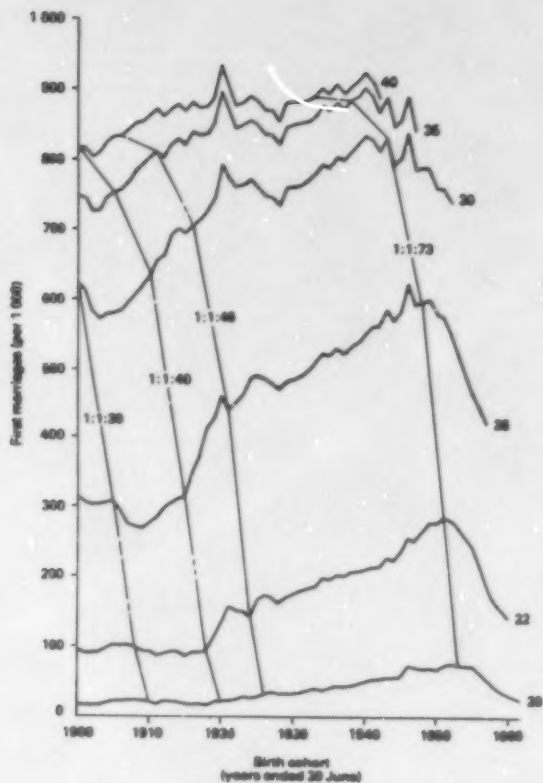


Figure 6

AGES BY WHICH ONE-QUARTER, ONE-HALF AND THREE-QUARTERS OF
 MALES MARRIED BY AGE 40 AND FEMALES MARRIED BY AGE 35
 HAD MARRIED: 1899-1900 TO 1953-54 BIRTH COHORTS

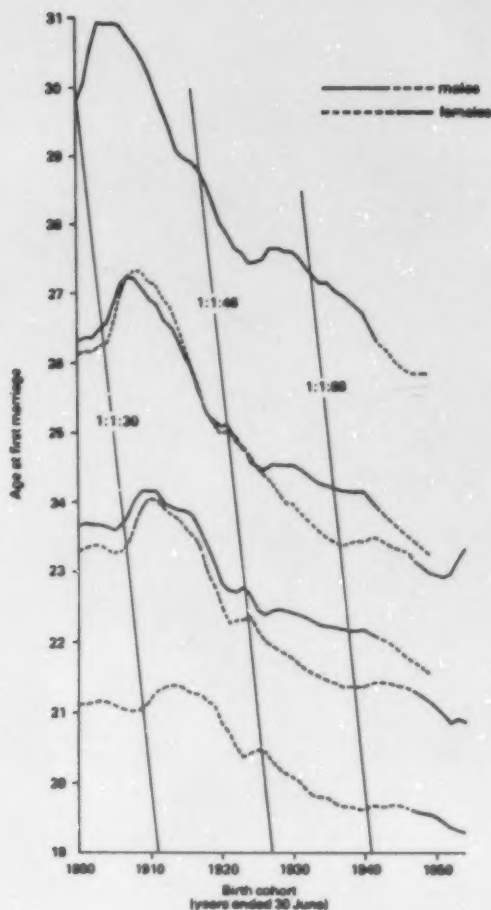


Figure 7

FIRST MARRIAGES OF PREGNANT AND NON-PREGNANT BRIDES
PER 1000 MEMBERS OF SUCCESSIVE FEMALE BIRTH
COHORTS BY AGE AT MARRIAGE

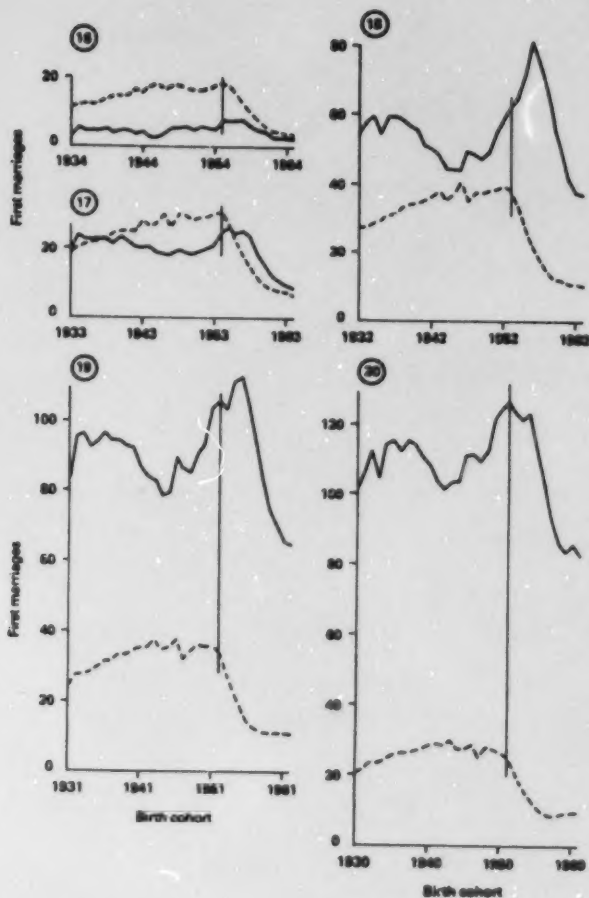


Figure 7 continued

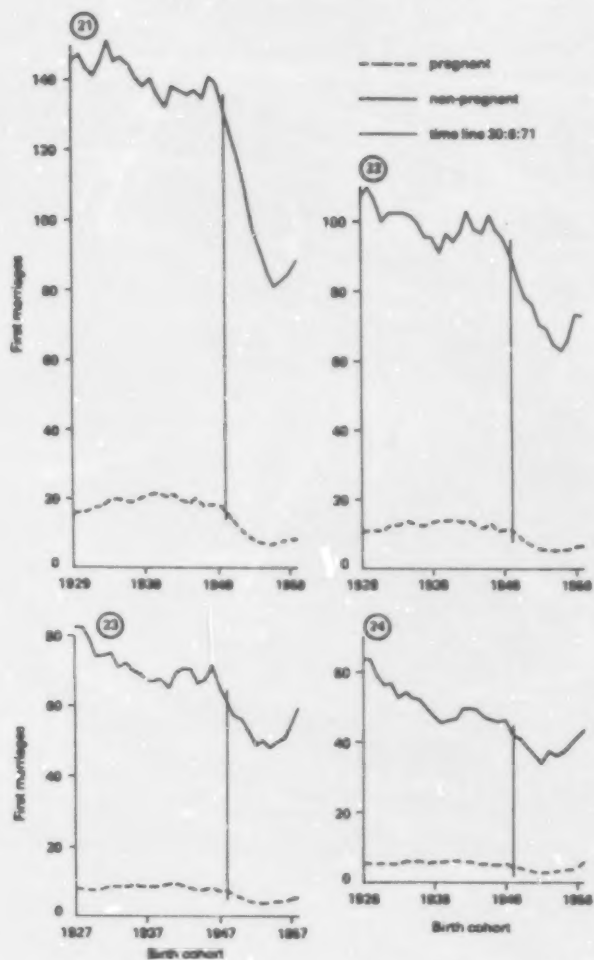
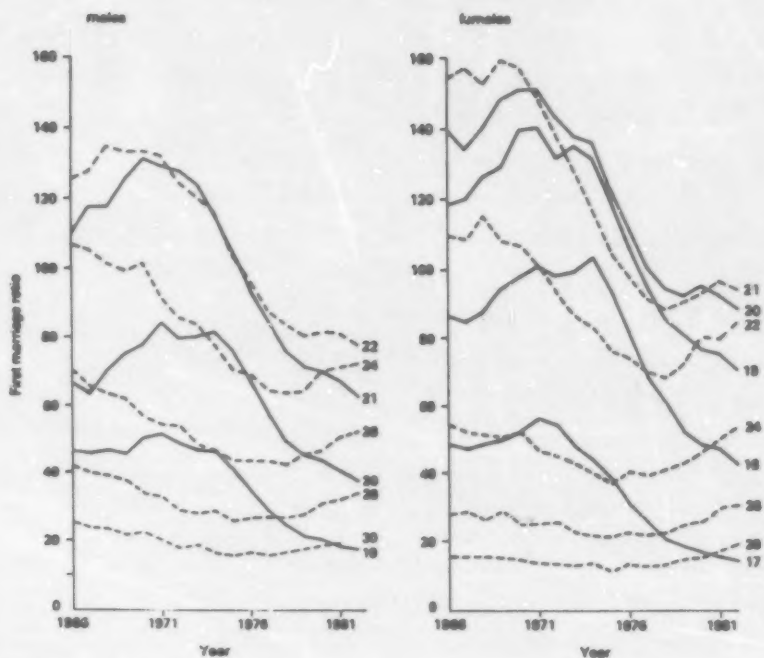


Figure 8

AGE-SPECIFIC FIRST MARRIAGE RATIOS BY SEX 1966-1982



The early stages of the family life cycle in Australia: Demographic changes since the 1960s

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The empirical studies of the family life cycle use, almost invariably, simple nuclear family as a conceptual framework. In such instances, the FLC begins with the formation of a family through a socially accepted and, in most instances, formally recognized form of cohabitation; generally, this will in most societies be formal marriage. The FLC then continues with the births of children, reaching subsequently a stage when children start leaving parental home for education, marriage, or work and become more or less independent of the family of origin. Finally, the FLC is terminated by the death of the last surviving spouse. Table 1 shows the FLC stages in such a simple nuclear family model. There are, however, many modifications and alternatives to this basic model often designed to serve the purpose of a particular researcher (Young, 1977; Glick, 1955). Two extreme examples may be mentioned: Glick (*op.cit.*) discerned in her study only five stages of the cycle; in contrast, Hill and Rodgers (1964) subdivided the FLC into 24 stages.

TABLE 1 in here

In this paper we focus on the first, formative stage of the FLC but expand the model to capture some of the events that in Australia and other Western societies

precede formal marriage; in particular we shall incorporate conceptions outside formal marriage as we believe, and have shown elsewhere (Ruzicka and Choi, 1981) that changing frequencies of such events partly account for the changes in the marriage patterns that occurred in Australia since about the early 1970s. The FLC model in Table 1 implies a sequence

'marriage - conception - first birth'.

Although this has been the most frequent sequence of events in the early part of the FLC in our society, there have also been not uncommon instances of

'conception - marriage - first birth'

or

'conception - birth - (marriage)'.

The frequency of the two latter sequences appears to be age selective and there is some indication that their incidence varies among various segments of the Australian population defined in terms of ethnicity and social class. (Ruzicka, 1976; Refshauge, 1982).

Two events that may terminate the FLC at any intermediate stage - namely divorce and premature death of a spouse are not mentioned in the model shown in Table 1. With mortality as low as it is now in Australia the chances of a wife or a husband dying early in marriage are extremely small.

According to the 1975-1977 Australian Life Tables about 13 men out of 1000 married at age 25 would die before reaching age 35 years. Out of 1000 women married at age 20 only five would not live at the tenth anniversary of their

wedding. Marriage for most of its duration is now at a greater risk of dissolution by divorce than by premature death of either spouse. Thus, we have excluded the effect of mortality on the early stage of the FLC from our discussion altogether and will mention the impact of divorce only briefly, as another paper presented at this Conference deals with divorce in detail (Josephian, 1983).

The paper focuses on the two decades from 1960 to 1982 as within this period fall some of the events that affected the early stages of the FLC: the introduction of the contraceptive pill, easier access to legal interruption of unwanted pregnancy, reforms of the marriage and divorce laws, recognition of legal status of children born outside marriage, increasing incidence of de facto relationships, and changes in the status of women - both legal and factual (Sihombing, 1982; Ware, 1982).

The 'early stage' of the FLC in this paper represents in most instances the first five to ten years after marriage and conceptions preceding marriage to the extent to which they can be documented. Outside the scope of our analysis are stillbirths and spontaneous and induced terminations of pregnancy; hence, conceptions in this paper are only those that were terminated by one or more live births. The limitation of the analysis to the first five to ten years after marriage is dictated merely by practical considerations of analysis as explained in the Annex.

Premarital conceptions and their outcome.

Of all confinements resulting in one or more live births that were registered in the early 1960s, 12.6 per cent were conceived outside marriage. In just under a half of them (43.6 per cent) the mother was unmarried at the time of confinement. Twenty years later the proportion of confinements conceived outside marriage rose to about 18 per cent and more than 70 per cent of them were to unmarried mothers (Table 2).

TABLE 2 in here

The annual data shown in FIGURE 1 indicate that non-maritally conceived births reached the highest proportion (17.8 per cent of all registered confinements) in 1971 and 1972, declined thereafter to 15.2 per cent in 1976-1977 and rose once again quite steeply to 18.8 per cent in 1982, the latest year for which data are currently available. In contrast, the proportion of non-maritally conceived births that were delivered by unmarried mothers has been rising continuously throughout the period and some acceleration of the trend is noticeable after 1977.

FIGURE 1 in here

When dealing with events of major social concern, absolute magnitudes are often of equal importance from the policy point of view as are the relative frequencies. Between 1960 and 1982 the annual number of conceptions

(terminated later in live birth) outside marriage increased from over 25,000 to just under 45,000 (although, higher annual frequencies were recorded: 48,820 in 1971 and 46,777 in 1972). Those delivered by unmarried mothers rose continuously from 10,870 to 32,679; those preceded by marriage had a more erratic movement - their number dropped from 14,301 in 1960 to 12,053 in 1982 though a maximum number of 23,416 was reached in 1971 and the lowest figure of 10,861 was recorded in 1979.

To estimate the age-specific incidence of non-marital conceptions we have to determine the number of women 'at risk' at a given point in time and the number of confinements resulting in live births - both ex-nuptial and nuptial at short marriage durations, adjusted so that they correspond to the population 'at risk'. The principles of these adjustments and the formulae used here are set out in the Annex to this paper.

During the 1960 to 1981 period the non-marital pregnancy rates underwent a considerable change. At all ages except the last age group (35-44 years olds) the rates reached their post-war peak in 1971 (Figure 2-A). During the following decade the rates steeply declined: lower rates than those prevailing in 1980 and 1981 were last recorded in the late 1940s. Hence, the ascending part of the time trend took about 20-25 years while the descending branch took only about half that time to reach approximately the earlier levels. The age pattern of non-marital pregnancy rates (NMP) changed quite dramatically: in the late 1940s the NMP rates culminated at about the

ages 19 to 21 years displaying typically a rather flat broad peak. That pattern continued with only minor variations to the mid-1950s. Subsequently, with the general increase in the NMP rates, a distinct new peak started emerging since about 1960 at ages 25-29 years. When the rates reached their apex in 1971 there were two peaks discernable: one at the age 19 and the other at 25-29 years. The period of the steep decline since 1971 has been marked by a sharp reduction of teenaged NMPs on the one hand and a preservation of the high level of such pregnancies at ages 25-29.

FIGURE 2A and 2B in here

As noted earlier, non-marital pregnancies have, according to their termination, two components:

Non-marital pregnancy $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{marriage - birth...nuptial component} \\ \text{birth - (marriage)...ex-nuptial component} \end{array} \right.$

The proportion of non-married pregnant women who got married before confinement underwent, since the late 1940s, considerable change in two respects. (Data shown in Figure 2-B are selected years demarkating periods of significant change.) Firstly, the proportion of all NMP women marrying before confinement declined from a post-war peak of 53.5 per cent in 1947 to 28.4 per cent in 1978 and rose again to 31.9 per cent in 1981. Secondly, the age pattern of the

proportions marrying before confinement remained approximately constant until the mid-1960s, but then changed quite substantially.

TABLE 3 in here

Characteristically, the highest proportions marrying were found among those NMPs aged 18-21 years (varying within about 67-75 per cent). With rising age, the marriage was becoming a less frequent intervention: in the age group 35-44 only between 15 and 25 per cent of NMP women married before the child was born. By the mid-1970s the shape of the age pattern changed markedly as a result of the steep decline in the proportions marrying among the youngest NMP women and a slight increase among the older ones. The new age pattern of the nuptial component of the NMPs is now characterized by a steep increase from very low levels of 20 to 30 per cent among 16 to 17 years olds to a peak of 40 to 45 per cent among 18 to 20 years olds, followed by a slow descent to between 20 and 25 per cent among the oldest women aged 35-44 years.

First marriage

In another paper presented at this conference (Carmichael, 1983) the changes in the post-war pattern of marriage are discussed in detail. Here, we will make only a few general observations concerning the main trends. In almost all studies of the FLC formal marriage is the starting point. In the 1960s this undoubtedly applied for

most Australians: only less than 10 per cent of males and 5 per cent of females never married by the time they turned 50 years of age. This was still true in 1981 according to the census. Throughout the 1960s until the mid-1970s age at first marriage continued declining for both males and females; the median age reached a plateau of 23.3 years for males (1972-1974 marriages) and 21.0 for females (marriages of 1971 through 1975 with 20.9 years for brides married in 1974).

TABLE 4 in here

Since then, however, the proportions marrying started rapidly declining at the younger ages and the median age at first marriage rose once again. By 1982 the median age of grooms (24.6 years) and of brides (22.4 years) by and large returned to the levels recorded for the marriages of the early 1950s. The change in the age pattern of marriage, that is, the deferment of marriage, resulted in proportions of never married in the 1981 census that, at the ages under 30 years, closely resemble those returned 35 years earlier at 1947 census. Whether this change is an early sign of a later return to higher proportions who never marry at all is, at this stage, a matter of conjecture.

Family formation - the first and subsequent births

The formation stage of the FLC - that is the period between formal marriage and the birth of the first child - used to be a comparatively short one in Australia, partly

because a considerable percentage of the brides were pregnant at the time of marriage. Of the brides married at the beginning of the 1950s, about 14 per cent were pregnant and about 23 per cent of those presumably not yet pregnant conceived and delivered their first child within the first year of marriage ('early starters'). The tendency toward an early start of childbearing continued throughout the 1950s into the early 1960s. The brides married in 1959-1961 had one of the highest proportions premaritally pregnant (between 20 and 22 per cent) as well as the highest proportion of 'early starters' (26 per cent). By the time they celebrated their third marriage anniversary, only less than one quarter were still childless and about 12 per cent remained childless at the fifth anniversary.

TABLE 5 in here

Since then each subsequent marriage cohort started its FLC with a lower proportion of pregnant brides and even more rapidly diminished the proportions of wives having the first child very early in marriage. Among those married in 1971 still 20 per cent were pregnant but only 10 per cent of those whose marriage had not been advanced by pregnancy conceived and gave birth to their first child while still in the first year of marriage. The postponement of childbearing continued throughout the early 1970s but might have reached a plateau in the late 1970s. In the 1976-81 marriages only about 11 per cent of brides were pregnant and only about 7 per cent were 'early starters'. The

proportion of couples that, by the end of the third year of marriage, had at least one child declined from 78 per cent in 1961 marriages to 46 per cent in the marriage cohort of 1976 but slightly increased since then to almost 49 per cent in the marriage cohort of 1978. (Table 5).

Marriage dissolution by divorce

Comparatively low divorce rates applied in Australia throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Under that pattern of marriage dissolution, less than one per cent of marriages ended by divorce within five years, 3.5 per cent within ten years and 6 and 8 per cent within 15 and 20 years respectively (McDonald, 1982). The proportion of marriages ending in divorce started rising in the late 1960s; interestingly enough the increase was led by the couples who had married in the 1950s. A further impetus was provided by the new family law but this time the effect was greater at shorter marriage durations. Among marriages of 1974/5 the proportion divorced within the first five years has increased to 6.8 per cent and among those married in 1977/78 to 8.1 per cent. (For details see Josephian, 1982).

Despite the tendency to postpone the first birth among the more recent marriage cohorts, the proportion of early divorces (under five years of marriage) with children has not changed markedly. In 1971, children were involved in 34 per cent of early divorces, in 1976 in 34.9 per cent, and in 1982 in 34.3 per cent.

Discussion

In Australia, as in most other countries we have practically no information about that part of the family life cycle that is not associated with formal marriage except when a de facto union results in a pregnancy carried to term. We have no statistics to show how many unmarried couples live together neither do we know whether such an arrangement is considered a temporary one until children are born or a permanent alternative to formal marriage. Only if such a union resulted in a pregnancy that was not unwanted (and, hence, not interrupted by an abortion) the fact will be recorded in official statistics. Keeping this limitation in mind we may summarize the changes that occurred in the formation of family and in the early stage of the family life cycle since about 1960.

The frequency of the pre-marital stage of the FLC has been still rising in the 1960-1971 period: non-marital pregnancy rates were increasing and the nuptial component, though declining, did so only very slowly. Hence, an increasing proportion of NMPs resulted in ex-nuptial confinements. Admittedly not all of them were unwanted: some may have been to couples living in stable de facto unions that could not, however, be legalized by marriage as one or the other partner was legally still married but separated from his or her formal spouse. At the beginning of that decade the contraceptive pill was released in Australia (in January 1961) amid considerable publicity. Its use spread rapidly (Caldwell, 1982) though presumably less so among the unmarried and, in particular, teenaged

women. This may be conjectured from the fact that the percentage of pregnant brides shows a steady slow increase until the first half of the 1960s and, among those married at ages below 19, until the early 1970s. (Ruzicka and Choi, 1981; Refshauge, 1982).

In contrast, during the 1960s, the proportion of couples that started childbearing early after marriage has been gradually declining - presumably due to the effective use of the convenient contraceptive after marriage. Since 1971 the incidence of NMPs started rapidly diminishing as well and, by the end of that decade, it reached what appears to be a trough. The coincidence of this trend with the beginning of the relaxation of laws relating to abortion in some States is most probably not fortuitous. The fact that only less than one third of the reduced number NMPs is now terminated by nuptial births suggests that pregnancy may have become a less compelling factor to formalization of a de facto relationship, in particular for women in their twenties.

The steep fall in the incidence of NMPs during the past decade - in particular at ages below 20 - may have been one of the causes of the decline of marriage rates at those ages. It is true that at the end of the 1970s still 40-50 per cent of the very young brides (16 and 17 years of age) were pregnant at the time of marriage but this percentage was considerably less than the 60 to 73 per cent recorded in the early 1960s. First marriage rates dropped from 26 and 59 per 1,000 unmarried women aged 16 and 17 respectively in 1971 to 8 and 21 in 1978 and further to 6

and 17 in 1981. Refshauge (1982) has shown that the decline was associated with reduction in the incidence of premaritally pregnant girls among the brides.

The postponement of marriage spread over a wide range of ages since the mid-1970s and continued throughout the rest of the decade into the early 1980s. The trend toward later marriage started before the economic recession but its pace may have been accelerated by the gloomy economic prospects and uncertainty of employment. The social acceptance of cohabitation arrangements outside formal marriage, protection from unplanned pregnancy provided by widespread use of a range of contraceptive methods and a possibility of a recourse to induce abortion in the case of contraceptive failure or negligence, probably further contributed to deferment of formal marriage.

Those who got married in the early 1960s did so on average at a lower age than in the previous years. About one out of five brides was pregnant at the time of marriage and about one out of four became pregnant within the first three months after marriage. Close to 90 per cent of the couples had at least one child when they were married for five years, 58 per cent had at least two and about 20 per cent three children. On the average, these couples reached at their fifth marriage anniversary about 1.6 children.

From then on, though the age at marriage continued declining further, until the mid-1970s, fewer brides were pregnant and even fewer started childbearing early after marriage. The couples married in 1976-77 appear to have reached so far the slowest pace of family formation.

Although they were still comparatively young when marrying (the median age of brides and grooms was 21.3 and 23.7 years respectively by comparison to 21.6 and 24.7 years at first marriage at the end of the 1950s) only about 11 per cent of brides were pregnant and only 7 per cent were 'early starters'. By the time they were married for five years, less than two-thirds of the couples had at least one child, and 30 and five per cent respectively had the second and third child. The average issue of these marriage cohorts dropped to 1.0 at the end of the fifth year of marriage.

The decline in the birth rates in Australia during the past decade has been, at least to some extent, a result of the postponement of marriage and of childbearing within marriage. Whether these trends will eventually lead to increased proportions of never married and voluntarily childless is a matter of debate. In the 1979 Survey of Birth Expectation (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1980), however, only between 3 and 4 per cent of wives aged between 20 and 39 expected to remain childless. It may be argued, on the other hand, that the postponement of marriage coupled with the deferment of the first birth may further strengthen the tendency to limit family size to two rather than three children.

Modern contraception and, in extreme cases, abortion made marriage deferment and child spacing possible. In addition, since the 1970s, a massive move to sterilization

when the desired family size was reached suggests a stronger determination than ever before to avoid unplanned childbearing beyond a certain limit (Caldwell, 1982).

At the same time marriages have become less stable or more vulnerable. Divorce became more frequent and began to take place much earlier in the marriage, probably not because the new Act made such early divorce possible but because society now more readily accepts such a solution to unsatisfactory marriage (McDonald, 1982). This tendency introduces a new dimension to the early stage of the FLC and even affects the decision to marry: 'the increasing divorce rate has consolidated the feeling among young people that psychological maturity is a pre-requisite to marriage' (McDonald, 1982:197)

The end points of the present trends toward later marriage, greater vulnerability of marriage, and postponement of childbearing are apparently not yet in sight.

ANNEX

The estimation of measures of non-marital pregnancies

The method described here was derived by W.F. Refshauge in his study of Non-Marital Pregnancy in Australia (1982). Confinements registered in year t are tabulated by mother's age at confinement x and, in the case of first nuptial confinements, by marriage duration d in months. Using $C_{ex}(x,t)$ for ex-nuptial confinements to mothers aged x in year t , and $C_d(x,t)$ for nuptial first confinements to mothers married for d months, aged x in year t , we have for each calendar year and single age

$$(a) \quad C'(x,t) = C_{ex}(x,t) + \sum_{d=0}^7 C_d(x,t) + \frac{1}{2} C_8(x,t)$$

The number of non-maritally pregnant women, $C^*(x,t)$ as of 30th June of year t is then estimated by means of Lexis graph and a set of multipliers is derived to apply to $C'(x,t)$.

$$(b) \quad C^*(x,t) = \frac{1}{144} [(54 C'(x,t) + 18 C'(x+1,t) + 11.875 + \dot{C}'(x,t+1) + 18.125 C'(x+1,t+1)]$$

The population 'at risk', $P(x,t)$, comprises all women that could be non-maritally pregnant at 30th June of year t . They are the unmarried women $P_u(x,t)$ as of 30th June as well as those who had married during the 8½ months before 30th June. The relevant multipliers are again obtained from Lexis' graph:

$$(c) \quad P(x,t) = P_u(x,t) + \frac{1}{144} ((54 B(x,t) + 18 B(x-1,t) + 11.875 B(c,t-1) + 18.125 B(c-1,t-1))$$

From equations (b) and (c) we obtain four measures for the analysis of non-marital pregnancies:

- (1) the non-marital pregnancy rate, r , per 1,000 women at risk,

$$r = 1000 \frac{(b)}{(c)}$$

- (2) applying in (b) only the ex-nuptial confinements, namely $C'(x,t) = C_{ex}(x,t)$ we can derive the ex-nuptial component of the non-marital pregnancy rate

$$r(ex) = 1000 \frac{(b)'}{(c)}$$

where (b)' is modified using $C'(x,t) = C_{ex}(x,t)$

- (3) using only the nuptial component in equation (b), that is $C'(x,t) = \int_{d=0}^7 C_d(x,t) + \frac{1}{4} C_g(x,t)$ we obtain the nuptial component of the non-marital pregnancy rate

$$r(n) = 1000 \frac{(b)''}{(c)}$$

- (4) Finally, the ratio of the nuptial component $r(n)$ to the non-marital pregnancy rate, r , yields the proportions marrying (expressed as a percentage) among non-maritally pregnant women,

$$p(m) = 100 \frac{r(n)}{r}$$

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TABLE 1 : Basic Model of Nuclear Family Life-Cycle

Phases of family life-cycle	Events characterizing	
	beginning of phase	end of phase
I Formation	Marriage	Birth of first child
II Extension	Birth of first child	Birth of last child
III Completed extension	Birth of last child	First child leaves home
IV Contraction	First child leaves home of parents	Last child leaves home of parents
V Completed contraction	Last child has left home of parents	First spouse dies
VI Dissolution	First spouse dies	Death of survivor (extinction)

Source: Statistical Indices of Family Health. Report of a WHO Study Group, WHO, Technical Report Series, No. 587, Geneva, 1976.

TABLE 2 : Confinements Resulting in One or More Live Births, Conceived Outside Marriage. Australia, 1960-1982

Year, Period	All confinements	Of them resulting in live births		
		ex-nuptial	nuptial at duration less than 8 months	all conceived outside marriage
1960-64	1 159 738	63 770	82 346	146 116
1965-69	1 153 920	87 738	102 060	189 798
1970-74	1 278 899	119 156	100 512	219 668
1975-79	1 123 578	119 839	56 984	176 923
1980	223 318	27 826	11 405	39 231
1981	233 535	30 956	12 313	43 269
1982	237 454	32 679	12 053	44 732

	Percentage of confinements conceived outside marriage (out of, all confinements)	of them, per cent resulting in birth	
		ex-nuptial	early nuptial
1960-64	12.6	43.6	56.4
1965-69	16.4	46.2	53.8
1970-74	17.2	54.2	45.8
1975-79	15.7	67.8	32.2
1980	17.6	70.9	29.1
1981	18.5	71.5	28.5
1982	18.8	73.1	26.9

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births 1972-1982 (annual issues) and Demography Bulletin 1960-1971 (annual issues).

TABLE 3 : Non-marital Pregnancy in Australia: Indices for Selected Years

Age group	Indicator	1947	1960	1971	1981
under 20	NMP rate*	18.8	29.4	39.7	17.9
	ex-nuptial component*	5.3	8.1	16.6	12.2
	% marrying	71.8	72.5	58.1	31.7
20-24	NMP rate*	29.5	41.0	46.5	26.0
	ex-nuptial component*	9.4	15.6	24.2	17.0
	% marrying	68.2	62.0	48.0	34.8
25-34	NMP rate*	21.6	42.0	46.0	27.4
	ex-nuptial component*	11.7	29.0	35.1	18.6
	% marrying	45.8	31.0	23.8	32.1
35-44	NMP rate*	6.9	13.3	13.8	7.2
	ex-nuptial component*	5.1	11.0	12.0	5.3
	% marrying	26.1	17.3	13.0	26.4
All ages	NMP rate*	17.6	30.2	34.1	18.9
	ex-nuptial component*	8.2	17.6	22.7	12.9
	% marrying	53.5	41.8	33.5	31.9

* per 1,000 women at risk (never married, divorced, widowed); calculated as weighted sum of the age-specific rates, the weights being the length of each age-interval.

TABLE 4 : Percentage of Males and Females Who Had Never Married, by Age.

Age group	Males				Females			
	1947	1971	1976	1981	1947	1971	1976	1981
15-19	99.3	98.6	98.9	99.5	94.4	91.2	92.7	95.9
20-24	76.5	63.9	66.7	77.3	51.4	35.7	40.1	54.7
25-29	37.9	25.7	25.5	35.8	21.0	11.6	13.1	19.8

TABLE 5 : The First Stage of the Family Life Cycle Between Marriage and Childbearing: Selected Marriage Cohorts.

Year of marriage	Percentage of brides		Percentage of couples with at least one child at marriage duration		Proportion of couples progressing within 5 years of marriage from parity			Average parity at the end of the fifth year after marriage
	pregnant at marriage ¹	early starters ²	3 years	5 years	0 to 1	1 to 2	2 to 3	
1951	13.9	22.4	70.6	80.3	.80	.64	.28	1.46
1956	18.0	25.2	77.3	87.3	.87	.67	.34	1.66
1961	22.0	25.8	77.9	88.2	.88	.66	.28	1.63
1966	21.7	15.1	69.1	84.5	.84	.62	.22	1.48
1971	19.8	10.2	60.5	77.0	.77	.56	.14	1.26
1972	18.0	9.2	57.9	74.9	.75	.55	.14	1.22
1973	15.6	8.5	54.7	72.0	.72	.54	.14	1.16
1974	13.4	8.2	51.5	69.0	.69	.52	.14	1.10
1975	12.2	7.9	50.3	68.3	.68	.51	.15	1.09
1976	10.9	7.1	46.0	62.9	.63	.52	.15	1.00
1977	11.1	7.3	46.9	64.5	.64	.52	.16	1.03
1978	11.3	7.2	47.7					
1979	11.3	7.2	48.8					
1980	11.5	7.2						

¹ First nuptial confinements at marriage durations of 0 to 7 months

² First nuptial confinements at marriage durations 8 to 11 months, per 100 brides not pregnant at marriage.

Changes in marriage and sex-role attitudes among young married women: 1971-1982

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INTRODUCTION

Australia like other western countries has seen major technological, social and demographic changes during the post-war period which impinge on family life. With these changes have come shifts in values and attitudes towards the appropriate roles for women and men regarding the family and the workplace.

Three issues are dealt with in this paper:-

Firstly, the paper examines the changes in sex role attitudes of young married women between 1971 and 1982 in relation to domestic role sharing, the role of motherhood, and shared economic responsibility. The results are discussed in relation to some of the technological, social and demographic changes that have been occurring in Australia.

Secondly, the more recent sex role attitudes of young married males and females are compared in an attempt to ascertain the possible degree of tension or consensus amongst young married Australians on this issue.

Thirdly, comparisons are made of the sex role attitudes and the domestic roles assumed by each spouse as reported by a sample of married males and females in 1982.

Recent demographic trends relating to the family formation process indicate a decline in fertility, a delaying or postponing of children, later marriage age, increasing informal marriage and rising divorce rate.

Accompanying these trends has been a post-war period of economic prosperity until the mid-seventies; increased education levels and growth in tertiary education; decline in religious observance and increasing secularisation of values. Fertility has also come under very effective control with the introduction of oral contraceptives (Ruzicka and Caldwell 1977) and increased use of abortion and sterilisation. These birth control techniques have made the separation of sex and reproduction widely available and predictable thereby allowing a person to be sexually active and childless. This process appears to have had a profound effect on sexual behaviour and traditional sexual behavioural norms.

As Gordon Carmichael (1983) and Peter Macdonald (1983) noted in their papers, effective fertility control (including the increase in readily available abortions), a liberalising of attitudes regarding sexual mores, and increased cohabitation have changed the meaning of marriage. Young people no longer need to marry to engage in sexual relationships. There has been an undermining of the religious authority of the preceding century which maintained that legitimate sexual enjoyment should be linked with marriage and the desire to procreate.

Another major area of change that has influenced the family formation process has been the increased participation of married women in the workforce. Of particular importance has been the marked growth during the past decade of workforce rates for married women between the ages of 24 and 44 years. These years are the peak time for child-bearing and child-rearing. More women are now postponing the start of a family while others are staying in the workforce, on a full-time or part-time basis during the early child-bearing years. Several factors may be

linked with the decision of mothers to continue formal employment. These include attachment to work; dissatisfaction with assuming full-time child care responsibilities; a concern over being economically dependent on husbands; the availability of alternative sources of child care; and/or economic circumstances. Whatever the reasons, this trend has given women more power within the marriage than they have previously had due to their increased economic independence.

Traditionally, western societies have been organised along the lines of a gender-based division of labour, with men's and women's roles being highly differentiated. Recent studies have suggested that a shift in attitudes concerning the division of labour and accepted roles of the sexes has taken place (Scanzoni 1980, Mason Czajka & Arber 1976, Thornton & Freedman 1979). Egalitarian norms have developed which tend to ignore the differences between men and women in the assigning of responsibilities (Molter 1970).

A resurgence of feminism has accompanied this shift towards egalitarian roles. This movement, which emerged in the late sixties in America and in the early seventies in Australia, articulated and gave coherence to an ideology of sex role non-differentiation. The recent wave of feminism differs from previous feminist movements because it has grown out of and built upon prevailing social trends.

As William Chafe states:

'Shifts in employment patterns, demography and sexual mores may have had a momentum of their own, but feminism introduced a powerful ingredient of ideology and activism that sought to transform

these impersonal social trends and create new attitudes towards sex roles ... the women's liberation drive of the sixties and seventies operated in a context where the social precondition for ideological change were present.' (Chafe 1977, p. 122).

He further argues that the women's movement has a much broader appeal than in the past, as the major issues taken up by the movement affect all women. These include child care, abortion services, equal career opportunities and the greater sharing of household tasks. Whilst only a minority of women may be active within the movement, all women can relate to the issues.

In addition, the women's movement arose at a time when the gap between certain accepted social norms and the behaviour of young people was glaringly obvious. For instance, there had developed marked inconsistencies in the social norms and in the behaviour of the younger generation concerning pre and post-marital sexual behaviour, the role of motherhood and the conceptualisation of the family.

Research into sex role attitudes has indicated a trend towards the acceptance of egalitarian sex roles in such areas as women's workforce participation, women being active in public life and domestic role sharing. (Mason et al 1975, Thornton & Freedman 1979, Cherlin & Walters 1981, Antill, Cotton & Tindale et al 1983, Penman 1975, Rowlands 1979, Morgan 1983).

The strongest predictors of egalitarian sex role attitudes have been higher education and the workforce participation of married women. Higher socio-economic status, and maternal

employment during childhood have also sometimes been found to be related to egalitarian attitudes. Conversely, traditional sex role attitudes have been associated with being older, lower socio-economic status, lower education, religious observance and having larger families. Apart from education levels and the workforce participation of women, the associations discussed above have often been slight and not significant.

There have been several studies on changes in the sex role attitudes over time. With the exception of the panel studies undertaken by Thornton et al (1979, 1982), these investigations into changes in sex role attitudes have been based on cross sectional data that were generated between the sixties and late seventies in America (e.g. Mason et al 1976, Cherlin & Waters 1981).

The findings in these studies are similar to those in sex role attitude research generally. The more recent studies examining the changes in the late seventies and early eighties in America (Cherlin & Walters 1981, Thornton et al 1982) have indicated a slowing down in the shift towards egalitarianism in sex role attitudes. There is also a suggestion that whilst tolerance of women having equality in the workforce and community is accepted, there is less desire to do away completely with gender differentiation of roles between the sexes in the domestic realm. This trend, however, is more evident in men than women.

The area of research of particular interest here concerns changing sex role norms. Previous studies concerning the changes in sex role attitudes or preference are mostly post-hoc, resulting in crude measurement of both independent and dependent variables. Researchers seek out what data are

available and relevant to sex role attitudes in order to understand the phenomena. In general, single attitudes, or at best a few items relating to disparate aspects of sex roles, are examined as dependent variables while demographic factors (e.g. age, education) are taken as the independent variables. Inferences are then made from this cross-sectional approach about the nature of change in attitudes and the factors underlying such change.

PART I THE NATURE AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TECHNOLOGICAL
AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND SEX ROLE ATTITUDES

In this section, we examine the nature of some demographic changes that have occurred in Australia between 1971 and 1982, the changes in sex role attitudes that have occurred in this period and the contribution of time per se and demographic variables on sex role orientation. Before the variables are discussed, the sources of data are described.

1 The 1971 Sample

The Australian Family Formation Project, Melbourne Survey, 1971 (ANU 1971) was conducted by the Department of Demography at the Australian National University. The surveyed population consisted of Melbourne women who were currently married for the first time and who were under 60 years, in the Melbourne metropolitan area. The total number of women interviewed was 2652. From this sample 1135 married women in the age group 18-34 years were selected to provide the 1971 sample used in this study.

2a) The 1982 Sample

The Australian Family Formation Study was conducted by the Institute of Family Studies during 1981-82 (IFS 1982). The surveyed population consisted of men and women aged 18-34 years living in private dwellings throughout Australia. The total number of people in this sample was 2554. However, since there were only 96 Melbourne married women in the sample, it was

decided to increase the IFS sample to include all Australian metropolitan married women aged 18-34 years rather than use a Melbourne sample only. In doing this, two assumptions were necessary. Firstly, it was necessary to assume that there were no differences in attitudes between the small Melbourne sample in 1982 and the other Australian metropolitan samples. Secondly, it was necessary to assume that the same was true for 1971. Due to the differences between the two studies the first assumption was testable while the second was not.

The first assumption was tested by comparing the responses to the attitude items of the Melbourne sample of IFS 1982 to all other metropolitan samples. No differences were found. Since differences were found between metropolitan and country sub-samples in each state, the study was restricted to a metropolitan sample. The pooling of respondents from metropolitan areas increased the sample for 1982 to 495.

b) Family Formation Case Studies

This project which was designed and executed by Helen Glezer and Tamara Kotler was part of the Australian Family Formation Study. Sixty intensive case study interviews were conducted on 30 married males and 30 married females from the Melbourne 1982 sample. These 60 young marrieds also completed several questionnaires regarding different aspects of marital satisfaction, personality and family roles.

In this study material from the case studies will be drawn on for illustration purposes.

The Family Roles questionnaire (which will be discussed in Part III) is a modified form of a questionnaire devised by Kotler & Hammond (1981). It consists of 20 items covering various tasks including housework, financial management, child care, social life and emotional support. The questions are structured to allow both reporting and evaluation of the behaviours described and, in this version, there is the added dimension of including the perception of who performed the task in the respondent's family. (See Appendix 1 for a copy of this questionnaire).

General Predictions

On the basis of the research into demographic and attitudinal trends, the following broad predictions were made:-

- 1 The nature of demographic patterns will vary for the two samples.
- 2 The two samples will differ in sex role orientation. The 1982 sample will express a more egalitarian (or less traditional) position than will be evident for the 1971 sample.
- 3 The demographic factors examined and period per se (1971 versus 1982) will influence sex role orientation. Thus the predicted 'shifts' in attitudes will result, at least in part, from the changing nature of Australian society.

THE PATTERN OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGEa) Selection of Variables

The selection of demographic variables and their format was determined by the availability of comparable variables in 1971 and 1982 samples which made theoretical sense in relation to the literature on change in sex role attitudes and also to the demographic shifts which have been taking place during the post-war period. These variables and their categories are listed below.

Variable Categories

EDUCATION	Completed secondary education Incomplete secondary education
COUNTRY OF BIRTH	English speaking Non-English speaking
RELIGION	Religious affiliation No religious affiliation
HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION	White collar Blue collar
HUSBAND'S INCOME	Comparable scale for each time point (mean adjusted)
WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION	Working (full-time or part-time) Home duties
AGE	18-34 in years
FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGE	No children Youngest child 0-4 years Youngest child 5+ years
MOTHER WORKED DURING CHILDHOOD	Yes/no

b) Expectations

As discussed above, the structure of Australian society has altered over the last decade. There have been changes in the occupational structure evidenced in the diminishing representation of unskilled and manufacturing jobs in the workplace and the increased representation of married women in the workplace. Shifts in immigration policy have led to a reduction in the number of migrants represented in the population. Education levels have tended to increase while the birth of children has been postponed. Furthermore, there has been a decline in religious observance. Such trends should be evident in the differences between the 1971 and 1982 samples.

c) Results

Insert TABLE 1

Most of the significant differences between the two samples are consistent with the pattern of changes evident in Australian society. The increase in the proportion of Australian women who are continuing in education is reflected in the significantly lower proportion of women in the 1982 sample who had not completed high school. The diminishing proportion of the Australian workforce engaged in manufacturing occupations over the last decade is consistent with the lower proportion of women in the 1982 sample whose husbands held blue collar occupations. Conversely, the higher representation of the 1982 sample of women who held part-time or full-time occupations ties in with the growing representation of married women in the work-

force. Further, the higher proportion of women in the 1982 sample who were born in English speaking countries is consistent with the scaling down of the Australian immigration programme.

Given the trend toward delayed childbearing, we expected to find a higher evidence of childless women, or women with young families, a lower incidence of women with older children in the 1982 sample, compared with the 1971 sample. However, only the proportional representation of women with young families were consistent with expectations. There was a greater proportion of women with older families in the 1982 sample than in the 1971 sample while the differences in the proportion of childless women was negligible. Contrary to expectations no difference was found in religious affiliation. However, our measurement is rather crude. Many people may nominate the religion in which they were raised although they hold no commitment to this, or any other, formal religious creed. The proportions of respondents in this position may be greater in the 1982 survey.

At least two explanations can be provided for the greater mean age of women in the 1982 sample. Firstly the upper half of this sample represents part of the post-war baby boom cohort, while the lower half of the 1971 sample would represent this baby boom. Secondly, the tendency to marry at a later age in recent years would have led to a reduction in the proportion of younger women who were eligible for sample membership in 1982.

In summary, the 1971 and 1982 sample differed on most of the variables investigated. These differences were consistent with the changes in the structure of Australian society. In the next section, we examine the differences in sex role attitudes of the two samples.

CHANGES IN SEX ROLE ATTITUDES
SELECTION OF MEASURES

a) Attitude Items

The 1982 survey included some attitude items which were either identical to or had only minor variations from those used in the earlier survey in 1971. In this study, six of these items relating to sex role orientation are examined. In both 1971 and 1982 the response categories were four-point. Likert scales ranging from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. Don't know and No response were separate categories.

The items are set out below:-

- 1 Important decisions should be made by the husband.
- 2 Husbands should regularly help with the housework.
- 3 A woman is only really fulfilled when she becomes a mother.
- 4 Whatever career a woman may have her most important role in life is still that of becoming a mother.
- 5 Wives who don't have to work should not do so.
- 6 A wife should go where her husband wants her to go for his job.

The items listed above relate to:-

Domestic Role Sharing - Items 1 and 2 relate to domestic role sharing. Agreement to the item relating to decisionmaking implies a traditional sex role orientation, while agreement to the second item implies an egalitarian approach.

Role of Motherhood - Items 3 and 4 are both written in the traditional form, with agreement implying a more traditional sex role orientation.

Economic Responsibility - Items 5 and 6 are presented in line with traditional sex role beliefs, and indirectly relate to the area of work and the notion of shared economic responsibility.

b) Sex Role Orientation Scale

In order to facilitate analysis it was decided to combine the six sex role attitude items to construct a sex role orientation scale. This was done by summing each person's scores on each item. Items were scored in such a way that the egalitarian response was the highest score, and the Don't know response was used as the mid-point for each item. The possible range of scores was from 6-30.

In order to test the utility of the sex role orientation scale, alpha reliabilities of the scale were calculated for the 1971 and 1982 samples (taken separately) and for these samples when combined.

c) Expectations

Firstly, we expected to find a higher proportion of 1982 sample members which endorsed the egalitarian position for each item compared with the proportion of 1971 sample members which supported this position.

Secondly, given the American research studies which have suggested sex role attitudes have become more consistent and coherent over the past decade (Cherlin & Walters 1981, Mason et al 1976, Thornton & Freedman 1979) we expected to find greater consistency in the attitudes of the 1982 sample than in the 1971 sample. Such a trend would be reflected in the achievement of higher Alpha reliabilities for the 1982 sample.

d) Results

Table 2 lists the six attitude statements and the proportions of the two samples which agreed with each statement. In all but one case, support for the statement is taken as acceptance of the traditional stance. The only exception to this is the second item concerning regular help with housework by husbands. In this case, an egalitarian orientation is suggested by agreement with the statement.

Insert TABLE 2

In considering these shifts in sex role attitudes over the past decade, it should be remembered that a comparison is being made between young married women, that is those who have conformed to traditional societal norms regarding the institution of marriage and who are more likely to be traditional in their values than their single sisters in the same cohort.

For all six items the tendency to hold more egalitarian or (less traditional) opinions about the differentiation of roles between the sexes was greater in 1971 than 1982. The percentage shift varied from 14 per cent to 38 per cent.

Looking at the percentage level of agreement in 1971, bearing in mind that all items except the one concerning husbands helping with housework are expressed in the traditional sex role form, there was most support for egalitarian sex roles concerning helping with housework and sharing decisionmaking, in other words the area of domestic responsibility. 'Wives who don't have to work should not do so' was next. Then came the item concerning women only really being fulfilled by motherhood. Finally only 15 per cent answered in an egalitarian way to the item 'A wife should go where her husband wants her to go for his job'.

In 1982, the area of sex role egalitarianism which gains most support is still domestic role sharing, with the items relating to the importance of motherhood as a career for women, where we see the largest shifts in percentage agreement, being next. The items relating to economic responsibility and work have least support. This may be due to the recent economic recession.

These items can be looked at in terms of three areas:-

- 1 Domestic Responsibility - that is sharing decisionmaking and housework. In 1971, 44 per cent agreed that 'Important decisions should be made by the husband'. Support for this opinion dropped 16 per cent in 1982. (In-depth case-studies giving an insight into sixty marriages from the 1982 study tend to support these results, 70 per cent of respondents reporting joint decisionmaking behaviour in their marriage).

The level of support evident for the opinion that husbands should regularly help with housework increased from 63 per cent in 1971 to 77 per cent in 1982. Support for this item has shifted least, although it already had strong support in 1971. (The 1982 case studies show that whilst there is a belief that males should help with the housework regularly, this is usually confined to helping with the dishes, not with other household tasks such as washing, cleaning and shopping. Still the 'politics of housework' is a live issue in these case study marriages. In an open-ended question on areas of conflict, housework was the most frequently mentioned issue. It was mentioned by 40 per cent of respondents).

- 2 The Role of Motherhood as a Career - The items concerning motherhood were the items that shifted most over the decade. The item relating to women only being fulfilled through motherhood dropped from 68 per cent support in 1971 to 30 per cent in 1982. In 1972 there was 78 per cent agreement for the item 'Whatever career a woman has motherhood is still the most important role', and support for this dropped to 46 per cent in 1982.

When it is considered that around 77 per cent of the women in both the 1971 and 1982 samples were in fact mothers these results tend to indicate dissatisfaction with the limitations of that role in 1982. (This is indirectly reflected in the IFS 1982 case study material which has found a decline in marital satisfaction amongst those respondents with children. However, only a preliminary analysis of these data concerning the effects of children on marriage has been completed).

- 3 Shared Economic Responsibility - Of the two items that relate to work, one concerns wives working out of choice rather than economic necessity, and the other is concerned with the husband's job determining family priorities. These items are interpreted here as relating to the area of shared economic responsibility. Support for the statement that 'Wives who don't have to work should not do so' dropped from 62 per cent in 1971 to 46 per cent in 1982. This indicates that more than half the married women support the idea of work for choice rather than economic necessity. This links in with the findings of Headey & Wearing (1981) that working wives have a greater sense of life satisfaction and well being than housebound women.

There was a 19 per cent fall in the proportion which endorsed the position 'A wife should go where her husband wants her to go for his job'. This opinion received the highest agreement rate of all those measured in 1971 (85 per cent) and remained fairly high in 1981 (66 per cent).

In summary it would appear that married women have broadened their definition of themselves and their role. Compared with a decade ago, fewer women define themselves solely in terms of motherhood and biological functioning; more women expect shared responsibility in the home and show a tendency toward wanting to shoulder some of the economic responsibility with their spouses.

Alpha reliabilities of the sex role orientation measure are summarised below. As explained earlier, this measure was derived from the sum of scores obtained for each item, where a high score reflected the egalitarian attitude the more consistent the answers to each item, the higher would be the Alpha reliability.

1971 Sex role orientation scale statistics

Alpha = 0.47, $\bar{x}$ = 16.38, SD = 3.52

1982 Sex role orientation scale statistics

Alpha = 0.62, $\bar{x}$ = 19.72, SD = 4.01

Combined 1971-1982 Sex role orientation scale statistics

Alpha = 0.59, $\bar{x}$ = 17.41, SD = 3.99

As expected, higher Alpha reliabilities were obtained for the 1982 sample. This result is consistent with the view that the notion of sex roles has become more consistent and coherent over time.

The increase in consistency from 1971 to 1982 is similar to findings in other American studies examining changing sex role attitudes over time, that is that sex role attitudes have become more consistent and coherent over the past decade. (Mason et al 1976, Thornton & Freedman 1979, Cherlin Walters 1981).

The results of this section support the general prediction that the 1982 sample would endorse a more unified egalitarian position concerning sex roles. The earlier results also suggested that the 1982 sample differed from the 1971 sample on several demographic factors that have been linked with sex role attitudes in earlier research. Our next approach then is to examine the contribution of each of these factors to sex role orientation.

(No examination of the relationship of demographic factors to individual sex role items has been included in this analysis, but Appendix II contains graphs showing the relationship of each item to education level, country of birth, religious affiliation, husband's occupation, husband's income and family life cycle stage).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND
SEX ROLE ORIENTATION

Expectations and Method of Analysis

Previous research has suggested that education level and workforce participation of women are related to sex role orientation. Other factors which have sometimes been linked with sex role orientation include religious affiliation, country of birth, occupational status, income level, age, family life cycle stage, the experience in childhood of a 'working mother', and country of birth.

On the basis of this research, we would expect that the more egalitarian (or less traditional) sex role orientation would be endorsed by the following groups of women:-

- 1 Those who were born in English speaking countries,
- 2 those who, during their childhood, had mothers who participated in the workforce,
- 3 those who had completed high school,
- 4 those who did not nominate any religious affiliation,
- 5 those who participated in the workforce,
- 6 those who did not have children,
- 7 those whose husbands held white collar occupations,
- 8 those whose husbands had relatively high levels of income.

Although the more egalitarian orientation has been linked with younger age groups, we did not expect to find any relationship between age and sex role orientation given the narrow range of ages of the two samples investigated (18-34 years).

Finally, a 'period' effect was predicted. Given the various changes in the structure of Australian society and the greater publicity given to (and awareness of) women's issues, we expected to find a greater egalitarian orientation in women who participated in the 1982 sample compared with those who formed the 1971 sample.

The results of the regression analysis are summarised in Table 3.

Insert TABLE 3

Table 3 indicates that most of the variables included in the analysis contributed independently to sex role orientation. The period effect made the strongest contribution. This suggests that changes that have occurred in Australia over the recent decade have influenced the shift towards an egalitarian view. As discussed earlier it seems likely that the period effect reflected, in part, the increasing level of interest and consciousness of the sex role issue which was endorsed by the women's movement.

As predicted, education level, country of birth, workforce participation and religion also made strong contributions to sex role orientation. The betas obtained indicate that an egalitarian orientation was more typical of women who had completed secondary education; of those who were born in English-speaking countries; and of those who did not indicate any religious affiliation. Conversely, women with lower education, 'housewives', migrants from non-English speaking countries and those who nominate a religion were more likely to hold a traditional orientation. The husband's occupation and family life cycle stage made a significant but relatively small contribution to sex role

orientation. The betas suggest that the women with children and those whose husbands held blue collar occupations were inclined to express a traditional orientation while women having no children and whose husbands had higher status positions tended to show an egalitarian approach.

As expected age did not contribute to sex role orientation. Whilst other studies have found age to be an important indicator of sex role orientation, it must be remembered we are looking at a truncated cohort of 18-34 year olds. This finding also suggests there is no cohort effect from the 1971 and 1982 samples.

Although maternal employment and husband's income were expected to influence sex role orientation, the beta weights for these variables were not significant.

DISCUSSION

Results in this study show, as other studies in recent years have done, greater support for egalitarianism in all the individual sex role attitude items. The greatest shifts in this study being in the attitudes related to the meaning of motherhood as a career.

Also, this study has noted (as the higher alpha reliability in 1982 suggests) a greater coherence or consistency in sex role attitudes which suggest they are more homogeneous, showing evidence of an ideological shift regarding gender differentiation in line with the women's movement philosophy.

Our main expectations were confirmed. These findings are similar to other studies of sex role attitudes discussed earlier in this paper. Higher education and married women's workforce participation are the main identified determinants of sex role egalitarianism. The interesting question of the causal connections or reciprocal nature of the relationship between workforce participation of married women and sex role attitudes has been the subject of much debate (Waites 1974, Molm, 1978, Thornton et al 1982) but will not be taken up here.

The results suggest that certain demographic trends in post-war Australia, in particular the increased levels of education and married female workforce participation have contributed significantly to sex role egalitarianism. However, in addition we have a significant period effect accounting for part of the sex role attitude shift.

In interpreting the period effect it should be noted that this attitude change needs to be understood in relation to both the context of the decade within which it took place, and to the factors which set the climate for the change.

The 1982 sample and a proportion of the 1971 sample are part of the post-war generation. They, and a substantial percentage of their parents, have grown up in a period of economic prosperity. The bulk of them probably have high material aspirations. These women have had greater educational and employment opportunities than has been the case for previous generations. Moreover the increasing proportion of married women participating in the workforce has provided them with more role models of women with dual careers.

A major stimulus to the process of change in sex role attitudes was the introduction of the pill in Australia in the early sixties. Throughout their reproductive life, our samples have had access to and knowledge of readily available contraceptive technology that enabled them to separate sexuality from procreation. There has also been a relaxation of sexual mores in the same period and more open discussion about sexuality. In addition, safe effective contraception and readily available abortion and sterilisation has allowed the decision to bear a child to become a more calculated and pragmatic one. We are therefore observing a process whereby some major distinctions between males and females are collapsing more than ever before.

With increasing opportunities to lessen the differentiation of roles between the sexes in the ways mentioned above came a thrust towards egalitarianism. In turn, this was given coherence and impetus through the women's movement. It is relevant here to speculate about the content of the ideas expressed by the second wave of feminism. Whereas the first wave of feminism was concerned with gaining political rights and equality and power in the wider society, there was little questioning of women's roles in the domestic sphere.

The second wave of feminism, in addition to concentrating on the wider political and economic sphere, also addressed the issues of differentiation of roles by gender in the domestic realm (Gordon 1982]. The area of domestic roles became a central concern to the movement. The problems of the dual role of women at home and in the workforce, or the isolated woman at home, have been widely discussed in the literature (Friedan 1963, Gavron 1966, Oakley 1974).

Another more recent emphasis in the women's movement literature has emerged. It is not just women's household roles that are being questioned, but motherhood itself. The theme throughout this literature concerns the consequences of being a mother at a time in history when there has been an 'over idealisation' of motherhood (Rich 1974, Dally 1982, Badinter 1981, Friday 1977, Nicholson 1983). (For a fuller discussion of this argument see Chodrow 1982). This literature articulates and helps legitimise the less committed stance regarding the motherhood role voiced by many women in the 1982 sample.

The shift in attitudes away from motherhood as a primary goal in life, may also have come from the comparison these young women have made between the options open to themselves and those that were available to their mothers. Rather than experiencing positive role models to emulate concerning the way they would live as women, they appear to have experienced the reverse. With far greater opportunities available to them, they are seeking to live their lives differently from their parents.

The perceived differences between the marriages of young people and those of their parents were examined in depth in the case study interviews that were undertaken for the 1982

sample. What emerged from these case studies was a lack of openness, independence, considerable emotional distance and underlying tensions which these young married women perceived in their parents' marriages. Some examples of answers to the question, 'How does your marriage compare with your parents' marriage?' are recorded below.

'Oh, completely different. My mum's sort of, she was brought up where the girl stays at home, gets married, has kids, looks after the husband, cooks, cleans, washes, whereas I'm not like that. That's not my mentality any more. So I've changed. It's a completely different marriage.'

'We allow ourselves to be more honest with each other whereas Mum and Dad were always afraid to be honest, not to hurt each other's feelings... I think theirs is a more traditional marriage whereas ours is a newer marriage... We are probably a bit more free with each other just allowing each other to do what we like... free in accepting separation from each other.'

'About a thousand percent better, and much more what a marriage should be... Well she's not an equal sort of boss. She's an unequal sort of partner. I think she's always been a bit trodden on. That's the way they used to be.'

'Well one thing that's very different is that I have a lot more independence than my mother does. She's afraid to go out, not on her own, but with other women, because of what my father might think, and what other women might think who see her in public, or other men... But I can go out, if I want, on my own. Although if he's around and isn't doing anything, I'll go with him first.'

I can't say my father really dominated, because my mother had a lot of power, and she could influence, she could use it. So I think that probably at different times in different ways they stretched their muscles. But my father, I think probably had the final word on a lot of decisions. He had veto power.'

'I get a lot more help out of Tony than what my mother ever got, from my father... a lot of men of the old era are the type that they won't lift a finger to help the woman!'

'I can't really compare, everything we do is totally different. Firstly an entirely different attitude. There is no real selfishness in our relationship, where with Mum and Dad it tends to be very one-sided. I wouldn't like to compare it, the thought of comparing it horrifies me.'

'At the moment I can see it heading in much the same direction. Wife sitting back being quiet and not jumping up and down and complaining when she should. It does seem to be similar with the father, the husband, the more dominant one.'

The mothers of this post-war baby boom generation were the generation that Betty Friedan (1963) wrote of - women who, after the war, had settled back into domesticity in the suburbs; became over-involved with an idealised role of motherhood and homemaker; were expected to put the interests of their husband and children first; and defined themselves vicariously through the success and achievements of both their spouse and later their children. Perhaps the daughters of these women, who have had far wider options than their mothers, are trying to evolve new ways of creating families and set new definitions regarding the importance of motherhood as a prime goal in life for women.

These changes in the goals of women were linked to a wider process of adjustment of social norms to behavioural trends that have been evident for some time. This adjustment has been very marked in the period since 1971. The shift from traditional sex roles to more egalitarian sex roles has become recognised and acknowledged. The activities of the women's movement from the more reformist elements to the more radical have brought attention to issues that discriminate between the sexes.

The media has taken up the issues raised by feminists and discussed them seriously thus acting as legitimator for egalitarian views (Edgar 1980). In the past decade there have been a number of legislative changes (outlined in detail by Dowse 1982) which have opened up opportunities for women. These include the introduction of a minimum wage for women; the appointment of women's affairs advisers at Federal and State government levels, maternity leave provisions; and equal opportunity boards, to name a few. Whilst these changes move in the direction of equalising opportunities for women, their success in achieving equality should not be exaggerated. Their very existence however, legitimates a notion of more egalitarian attitudes.

There appears therefore to be a wider acceptance in society of the notion of egalitarian sex roles. The endorsement of a greater degree of egalitarianism in this area by government and the media, adds to the expectation of substantial attitude change in this cohort, particularly when there has been a decline in the influence of traditional social institutions governing accepted social norms.

So far, our analysis has been restricted to samples of young married women. We would expect, however, that the processes outlined above would also influence the sex role attitudes held by most young married men. The collapse of some of the major distinctions between men and women which occurred through the introduction of effective and simple birth control measures, the women's movement and the experience of wives who work should have contributed to a greater egalitarian orientation of men over the last decade. Part II of this paper was designed to address the question concerning the sex role orientation of young married men.

PART II COMPARISON OF SEX ROLE ATTITUDES OF YOUNG
MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN

Although no data were available concerning the sex role attitudes held by young married men in 1971, the 1982 study involved 293 of married men who were between 18 and 34 years old and lived in metropolitan areas. Thus, we were unable to assess any changes that may have occurred over the last decade in the sex role attitudes of such men. However, we could compare the more recently measured attitudes of young married men and women. This approach may provide some insights into the degree of consensus or conflict that exists between young marrieds in relation to sex role orientation. Table 4 shows the proportion of men and women who agreed with each of the six attitude statements.

Insert TABLE 4

As Table 4 shows, there is little difference between the sex role attitudes of young married men and women.

Looking at the different areas of sex role attitudes:-

Domestic Role Sharing

The major significant difference between married men and women is to do with the area of decisionmaking. More married men support the notion that males should make the important decisions than females. More married men also agree with the attitude that they should help with the housework than married females.

Role of Motherhood

Men were equally supportive of the propositions that motherhood is not the only career or the most important aspect of a woman's life.

Economic Responsibility

In the area concerning economic responsibility, or work and marriage, males were less likely than females to feel that a wife should go where her husband wants her to go for his job. However, husbands were more likely to support the notion that wives should only work if they have to, which seems to indicate that husbands appear to regard themselves as the primary breadwinner.

When the six attitude items were combined to produce a sex role orientation score for respondents, there was no significant difference found between young married males and females in 1982. Alpha reliability scores for the sex role orientation scales for males and for females were the same Alpha reliability = .62.

Given the overall similarity between the sex role attitudes of men and women in 1982, it seems reasonable to infer that the attitudes of young married men have altered over the past ten years in much the same ways as those apparent for women.

The 1982 study suggests that the more egalitarian orientation of men and women includes a general acceptance of domestic role sharing and of the sharing of economic responsibility together with a greater proportion of young married couples holding the view that women need a broader definition of

themselves than is provided by motherhood. These trends appear to augur well for family relations in the future, although it must be borne in mind that there is no guarantee that espoused attitudes are consistent with behaviour. The relationship between attitudes and reported behaviour is examined in Part III of this report.

PART III THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEX ROLE ATTITUDES
AND REPORTED BEHAVIOUR IN A SAMPLE OF YOUNG
MARRIEDS (30 males and 30 females)

So far we have focussed on attitudes concerning the domestic attitudes of the two sexes. The results suggested that men and women have tended to adopt over recent years less traditional or more egalitarian positions concerning sex roles. The apparent consensus, however, may not be apparent in behaviour. Our next step was to examine the level of domestic role sharing reported by the sexes and the extent to which the behaviours reported were consistent with the relevant attitudes.

The case studies of 30 men and 30 women (which formed part of the 1982 Family Formation Study conducted by the Institute of Family Studies) were used for this analysis. A list of tasks concerning housework, financial matters, social life and leisure and emotional support were provided (items concerning parenting were omitted from the analysis, as respondents included childless couples) and the respondents were asked to nominate the partner who should undertake the task. Finally, the respondents were asked to report which of their parents usually carried out each task. The results for the combined group of men and women are set out in Table 5.

Insert TABLE 5

The first three columns in Table 5 refer to the partner who usually carried out the tasks. Less than 50 per cent of the sample indicated that the husband tended to undertake any specific task. The most frequently mentioned task for husbands was gardening. All other housework tasks appeared

to be undertaken by the wives for over 70 per cent of the sample. Keeping in touch with relatives also appeared to form part of the wife's rather than husband's role for 60 per cent of the sample. Less than half the sample maintained that other tasks were undertaken by the wife. The sharing of most tasks relating to emotional support were reported by more than 60 per cent of the sample, 75 per cent maintained that decisions about how the family income would be spent were shared and 60 per cent reported that both partners tended to organise family holidays. Thus a majority of respondents indicated the wife was responsible for most of the housework while emotional support responsibilities were shared. Less than 50 per cent reported the husband alone carried out any of the chores listed. Of course there are many other chores that were not included that may have been undertaken more frequently by the husbands than wives (e.g. plumbing, painting woodwork, putting out the garbage bin). Thus we cannot make any inferences from these data concerning the percentage contribution of husbands and wives to the total functioning of the household unit.

The trends in the answers concerning who should carry out each task are interesting. The egalitarian position, that such tasks should be shared equally, was endorsed by at least 50 per cent of the sample for all tasks except five household ones. These five household tasks tended to be primarily viewed as the responsibility of women (shopping, cleaning, washing and cooking). The only exception was washing dishes. For all tasks included, the proportions of the sample which maintained that the responsibility should be shared was greater than the proportions that indicated that such sharing took place.

The percentage distributions concerning the sex roles of the parents were similar to those for the sample members and their partners, except in the area of emotional support. Both generations of women were reported to be primarily responsible for most household tasks. There was no incidence of a greater incidence of sharing these tasks among the younger generation, except perhaps cleaning the house.

Marked changes between the sex roles of the generation appear in relation to the emotional support sphere. Whereas the mothers alone were more often viewed as assuming these roles, the respondents tended to report that these responsibilities were shared in their own marriage. There was also a greater incidence of reported sharing amongst the younger generation compared with the parents in the fields of financial and social life/leisure.

The above results suggest that sex role attitudes are more inclined to be 'egalitarian' than is the case for sex role behaviour. Although the research discussed earlier suggests that changes in sex role attitudes towards a more egalitarian position have occurred the data concerning the partner's responsibilities suggest that little has changed in the behavioural sphere. The one exception to this concerns the emotional support area. Even here the incidence of egalitarian attitudes is greater than the incidence of role sharing in practice. However, a shift in behaviour across the generations appears to have taken place.

CONCLUSION

This paper has found -

- 1 Significant shifts in the level of support for egalitarian sex role attitudes amongst young married women (18-34 years) Between 1971 and 1982.
- 2 The following groups of young women showed a significantly greater egalitarian position in their attitudes:-

- . Those with a higher education level,
- . those women participating in the workforce,
- . those coming from an English-speaking country of origin,
- . those with no religious affiliation,
- . those having a husband in a white collar occupation, and
- . those without children.

In addition there was strong evidence that the time of measurement significantly affected sex role attitudes, which tends to suggest that events in the past decade influenced this change.

- 3 No significant differences were found between the sex role attitudes of married men and women, which indicates strong support for the presence of egalitarian sex role attitudes amongst young married couples between 18 and 34 years.

- 4 As a cautionary note, a comparison of attitudes and reported role behaviour was examined in a sample of sixty young marrieds (30 males and 30 females). The findings indicate that although young married people support the general idea of domestic role sharing about housework, in their day to day life this is not reflected in their behaviour. Further, when asked, they do not agree the tasks should be shared in their own marriage. However, in the area of emotional support there is strong agreement that this is the responsibility of both partners, and should be so in their own marriage, although the findings suggest that, in their parents' marriages, this tended to be the responsibility of the mother more than the father.

TABLE 1 A comparison of the AWU 1971 and IPS 1982 samples on demographic and family life cycle variables

Demographic variables	1971	1982
Education (% not completing high school)	86.9	74.5 ***
Religious affiliation (% religious)	88.9	89.2
Husband's occupation (% blue collar)	64.4	43.7 ***
Workforce participation (% working either full or part-time)	43.1	52.1 **
Country of birth (% English-speaking)	70.6	84.2 **
Family life cycle stage No children	21.1	22.6
Youngest child 0 - 4 years	61.8	55.6 *
5 +	17.1	21.7
Age	$\bar{x} = 27.67$	28.04***

* p .05

** p .01

*** p .001

TABLE 2 Comparison of agreement on sex role attitude items of married women 18-34 years in 1971 and 1982 (expressed to nearest percentage)

	1971 N = 1135	1982 N = 495	% Shift
<u>Domestic role sharing</u>			
Important decisions should be made by the husband (trad.)	44	16	28 *
Husbands should regularly help with the housework (egal.)	63	77	14 *
<u>Role of motherhood</u>			
A woman is only really fulfilled when she becomes a mother (trad.)	68	30	38 *
Whatever career a woman may have her most important role in life is that of becoming a mother (trad.)	78	46	32 *
<u>Economic responsibility</u>			
Wives who don't have to work should not do so (trad.)	62	46	16 *
A wife should go where her husband wants her to go for his job (trad.)	85	66	19 *

* p .001

TABLE 3: Multiple regression analysis on combined 1971 and 1982 samples

n = 1552

Independent variable	Simple r	Part r	Beta	
Period effect	.40	.34	.31	**
Education	.33	.22	.20	**
Country of Birth	-.27	-.20	-.17	**
Workforce participation	.16	.16	.16	**
Religion	-.18	-.14	-.12	**
Husband's occup. (blue collar)	-.28	-.08	-.08	*
Husband's income	.21	.05	.05	
Family life cycle stage	-.07	-.05	-.05	*
Age	-.00	-.00	-.00	
Mother worked during childhood	-.00	-.01	-.01	

 $r^2 = .32$

** = p .001

* = p .05

TABLE 4: Comparison of sex role attitudes of young married men and women (expressed to nearest percentage)

Sample: Married men N = 293 Married women N = 495

Attitude Item	Males 1982	Females 1982	Percentage Difference
<u>Domestic role sharing</u>			
Important decisions should be made by the husband (trad.)	29	16	13 **
Husbands should regularly help with the housework (egal.)	83	77	6
<u>Role of motherhood</u>			
A woman is only really fulfilled when she becomes a mother (trad.)	30	30	-
Whatever career a woman may have her most important role in life is that of becoming a mother (trad.)	48	46	2
<u>Economic Responsibility</u>			
Wives who don't have to work should not do so (trad.)	58	46	12 *
A wife should go where her husband wants her to go for his job (trad.)	60	66	6

** Significant at p .001

* p .01

TABLE 5: Allocation of domestic roles in sixty marriages from IPS 1982 Case Study sample

Sample consists of 30 married males and 30 married females

	Who does it Respondent's Marriage			Who should do it Respondent's Marriage			Who did it Parents' Marriage		
	H	=	W	H	=	W	H	=	W
<u>Housework</u>									
Does dishes after tea	10	17	73	5	58	37	3	33	63
Shops for food	2	8	90	-	23	77	3	3	93
Cleans the house		13	87	-	35	65	3	7	90
Does the washing	2	8	90	-	25	75	2	7	91
Cooks the meals	3	8	88	2	25	73		7	93
Does the gardening	48	27	25	42	50	8	47	23	30
<u>Finances</u>									
Pays the bills	33	22	45	30	53	17	50	7	43
Decides how the family income will be spent	17	75	8	12	87	2	43	32	25
<u>Social life/leisure</u>									
Organises family holidays	25	60	15	13	82	5	37	37	27
Keeps in touch with relatives	6	33	60		87	13	12	23	65
Organises social life	15	45	40	10	92	8	25	32	43
<u>Emotional support</u>									
Gives comfort	3	63	33	2	87	12	12	27	62
Shows understanding	17	65	18	2	98		13	37	50
Shows warmth and affection	12	67	22	2	97	2	13	38	48
Listens to problems	10	68	22	2	97	2	12	35	53
Smooths over disagreements	28	47	25	2	97	2	25	32	41

H = Husband does it or husband more than wife

= = Husband and wife do it to the same extent

W = Wife does it or wife does it more than husband

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DATA FILES USED :-

Caldwell, J. C. et al. Australian family formation project; Melbourne survey 1971 (machine readable data file). Principal investigators, J. C. Caldwell, C. M. Young, M. Ware, D. Lavis and A Davis, Department of Demography, Research School of the Social Sciences, The Australian National University (producer) 1971. Canberra: Social Science Data Archives, the Australian National University (distributor), 1982. 1 data file (1,075 logical records) and accompanying user's guide.

APPENDIX I

Family Roles Questionnaire

Please write in: W = Wife H = Husband C = Child/children
 M = Mother F = Father

	Who usually does it?	Who should do it?	Who did it when you were a child?
1. Does the dishes after tea.....			
2. Pays the bills.....			
3. Gives comfort.....			
4. Organises family holidays.....			
5. Takes the children on outings....			
6. Shows understanding.....			
7. Shops for food.....			
8. Helps the children with homework.			
9. Decides how the family income is spent.			
10. Is willing to forgive.....			
11. Cleans the house.....			
12. Disciplines the children.....			
13. Does the washing.....			
14. Shows warmth and affection.....			
15. Cooks the meals.....			
16. Listens to problems.....			
17. Keeps in touch with relatives....			
18. Does the gardening.....			
19. Smooths over disagreements.....			
20. Organises social life.....			

WH : Wife more than husband

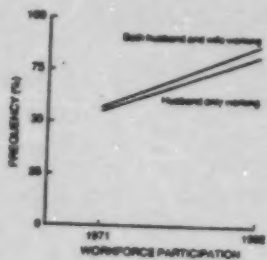
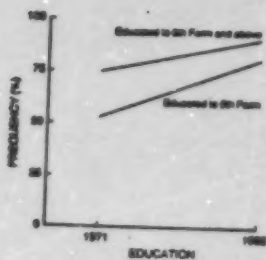
HW : Husband more than wife

W=H : Wife same as husband

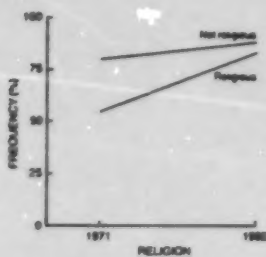
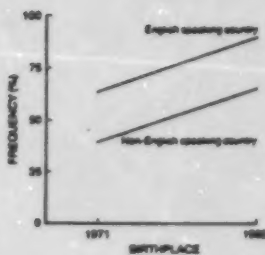
APPENDIX II

The following pages contain graphs showing the relationship of each attitude item to the demographic variables education level, country of birth, religious affiliation, husband's occupation, family life cycle stage. These graphs demonstrate the shift in support for these attitude items between 1971 and 1982.

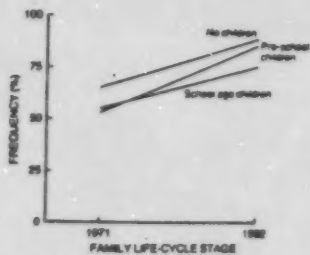
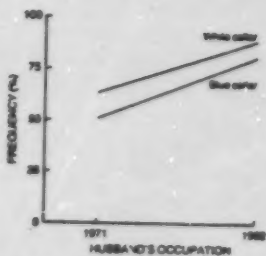
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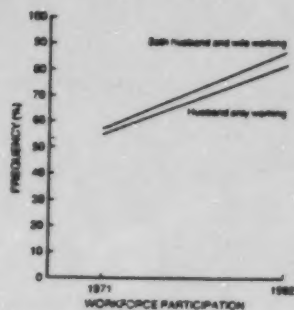
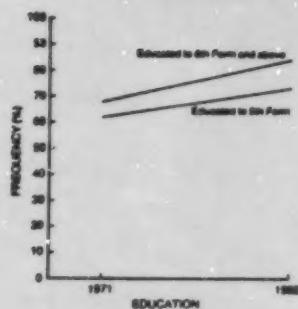
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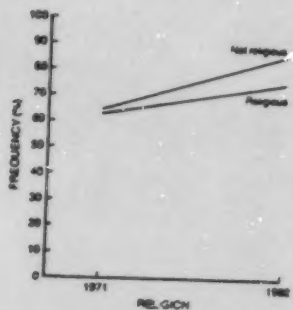
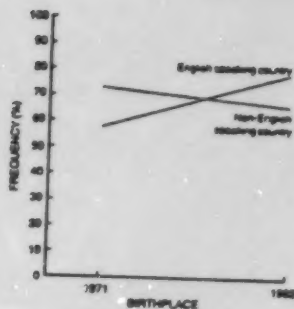
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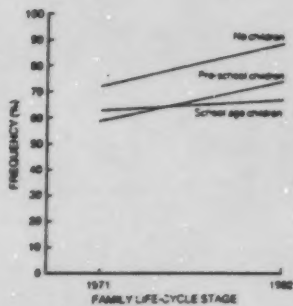
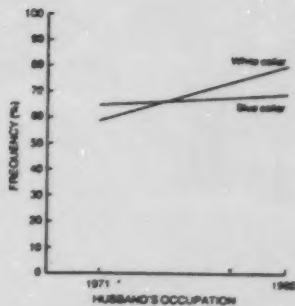
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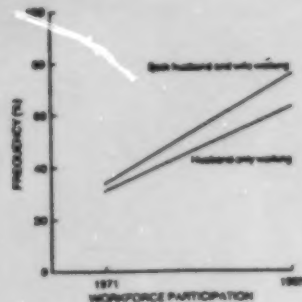
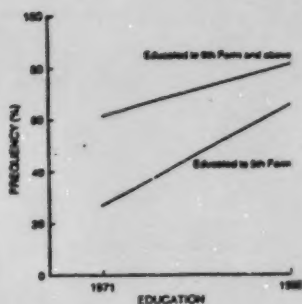
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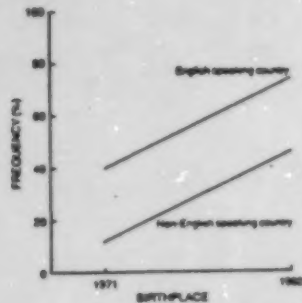
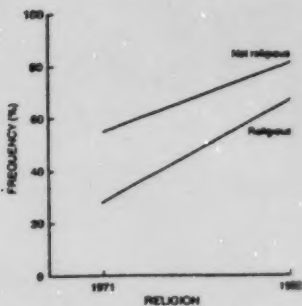
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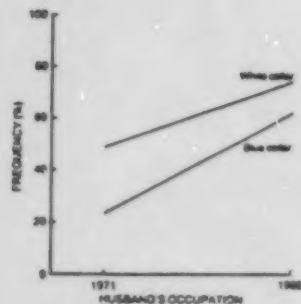
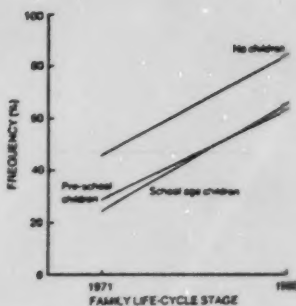
FULFILLMENT THROUGH MOTHERHOOD



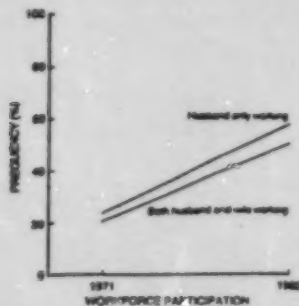
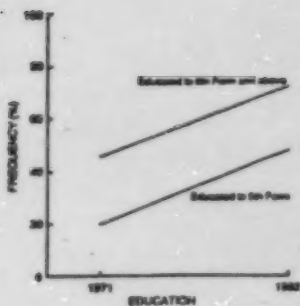
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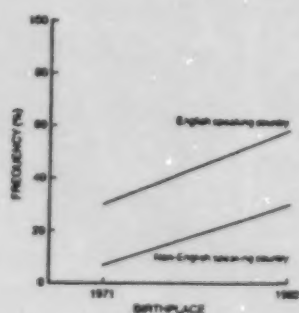
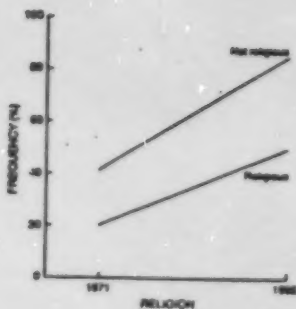
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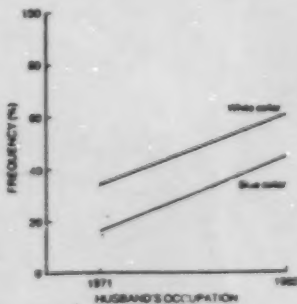
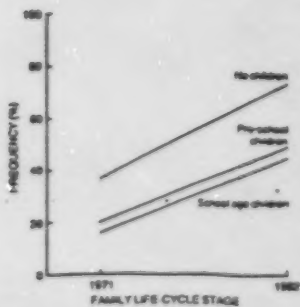
WHATEVER CAREER



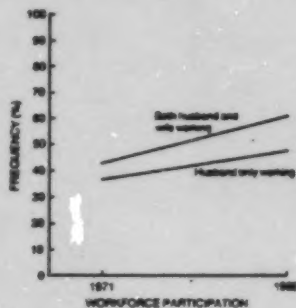
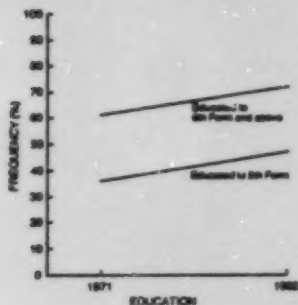
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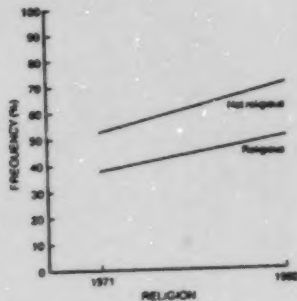
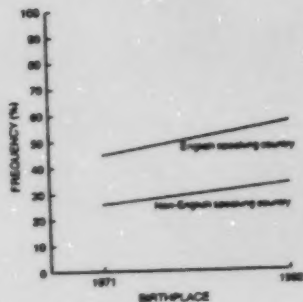
WHATEVER CAREER



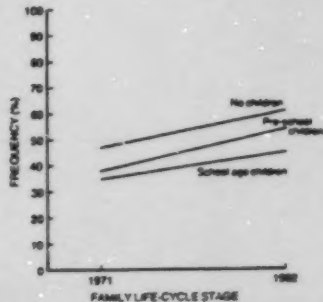
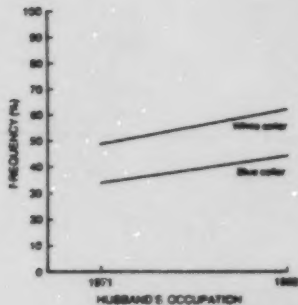
WIVES WORKING



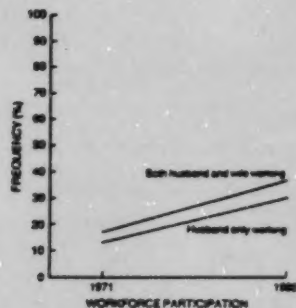
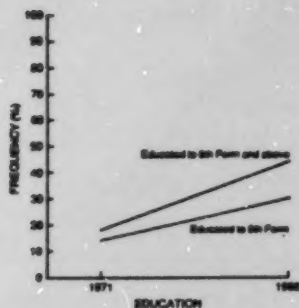
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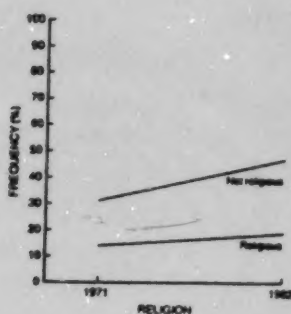
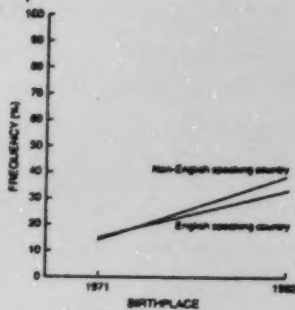
WIVES WORKING



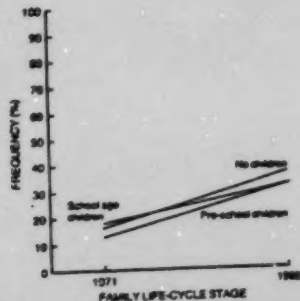
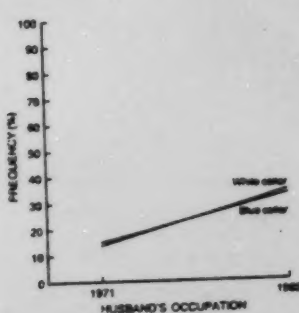
WIVES FOLLOW HUSBANDS



WIVES FOLLOW HUSBANDS



WIVES FOLLOW HUSBANDS



Nuclear family no thanks? Values, the family and other lifestyles

Frances Braum

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Introduction

This paper seeks firstly to establish the contemporary need for studies of values and attitudes towards the family and other lifestyles and secondly to describe the pilot stage of a study looking at the attitudes and values of those working or training in the social work and medical fields. A key aspect of the study was assessing the extent to which the image of the traditional nuclear family is regarded as a yardstick against which to judge non-traditional lifestyles.

Values are not always paid as much attention as they should be primarily because of the difficulties of measuring and assessing them. There is confusion in the literature as to what constitutes values and attitudes. Values are not necessarily constant across time and circumstance. People may hold one set of values for themselves and a completely different one for other people. Behaviour is not necessarily related to values as people may behave in a very different way from others who hold similar values. Certainly the area of family values is, as British researchers have described it "an intellectual and moral mine-field" (Study Commission on the Family, 1982, p.7). Given such problems this paper is a tentative contribution to the opening up of the debate on family values rather than a definitive statement on the topic, and in this context values are taken as expressions of the desirability of certain things and phenomena (Hawthorn, 1970).

Why Study Values?

This section of the paper examines the current changes affecting families and discusses the thorny issues of ideologies of the family and the recent political interest in it. It seeks to establish the centrality of values to considerations of the family.

1. Changes in family structure and behaviour

A major component of the argument in favour of studying family values is the extent of change in family patterns in Australia. These are described and evaluated below.

(a) Marriage, divorce and cohabitation

The long term trend over the twentieth century has been for a larger proportion of Australian men and women to marry, and to marry at a younger age (McDonald, 1974). Divorces have increased dramatically in the last decade, particularly since the introduction of the Family Law Act in 1975. In 1971 there were 13,002 divorces, in 1976, reflecting the legislative change, 63,267 and in 1980 39,258 (A.B.S., 1981a). Non-marital cohabitation appears to be increasing (N.S.W. Law Reform Commission, 1981). The proportion of marriages involving at least one divorced person has risen dramatically since the 1960s. In the period 1966-70, 6% of all grooms were divorced and 5.9% of brides. In 1981 the figures were 20.4% and 19.2% respectively (A.B.S., 1981b). The cumulative effect of all these changes is to make marriage a more fluid and changing institution than it has been in the past.

Apart from demographic changes there have been developments in the type of marriage and other intimate relationships people have. There is some suggestion (although the extent of the trend is disputed) that the internal dynamics of marital relationships are changing with more emphasis on and expectation of companionship and equality in marriage (Caldwell et al., 1976). Literature from the U.S.A. points to an increase in non-traditional marriages like "open" marriage, commuter marriages, and dual-career families (Macklin and Rubin, 1983). These arrangements may be making some impact in Australia. Also of significance is that in recent years spouse assault and rape within marriage has been defined as social problems (Yeatman, 1979). The image of the loving, gentle family - the "haven in a heartless world" (Lasch, 1977) is being eroded as violence

and individual mental problems are associated with stresses emanating from conventional family life (Laing, 1976). In Australia there has been an increasing array of evidence that 'the family' can be a cover for a range of sexual abuses and other violent acts (Stewart, 1982). Unemployment puts additional strains on marriages and families, as has been well documented (Cass, 1981b; Brewer, 1982).

(b) Parenthood

People are having fewer children than in previous generations. Since 1971 birth rates in all age groups have dropped. In 1976 the birth rate dropped below 17 for the first time since the 1930s and by 1980 had reached 15.3 (A.B.S., 1981c). There are indications that some married couples will decide to have no children at all (Baum, 1983). These changes in fertility behaviour reflect a number of factors, but in this context the key factor is the way they reflect changed attitudes towards parenthood. The automatic links between marriage and child bearing seem to be weakening and pronatalist pressures decreasing (Caldwell, et al., 1976). The "motherhood myth" (Comer, 1974) is under attack, with mothers increasingly willing to talk about the darker aspects of parenthood (Nicholson, 1983) and fathers accepting more responsibility for child care; the latter's role in child rearing is receiving more attention (McKee and O'Brien, 1982) making at least minor alterations to patterns of domestic labour. Add to this the increased labour force participation rate of married women - in 1979 58% of married women between 20 and 50 were involved in work outside the home (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1981) - and it is clear we are living in a period of a comprehensive renegotiation of the social division of labour. How we choose to cope with the many dilemmas thrown up is ultimately a matter of value choices.

There is an increase in the variations in parenting arrangements. These have been summarised in the British context by Rapoport et al (1982); high divorce and remarriage rates suggest there is similar diversity in Australian parenting patterns. Examples of diversity are blended families, shared parenting, A.I.D. families, adopting or fostering families. While structurally these variant families look much like a traditional nuclear family there can be considerable differences in the internal dynamics of the family. Thus Snowden and Mitchell (1981) have considered the special problems faced by A.I.D. families and attention has been paid to the often difficult experiences of step families (Burgoyne and Clark, 1981). The most prominent variation is single-parent families. These have increased from 131,000 in 1969 to 282,000 in 1981 (Edgar and Headlam, 1982). In 1981 13.2% of all families with children were one-parent families. The cumulative effect of these different parenting situations is that it is much more difficult to talk of normative parenting in terms of children living with their two natural parents. Yet many individuals and groups make assumptions about 'normal' family life, about what is good or bad based on a host of social, moral and religious values. Simply because diversity in parenting patterns (especially visible ones like single parent families) represent a challenge to many of these values attitudes towards the variant families can be both ambiguous and unsympathetic.

(c) New Lifestyles

The period since the 1960s has seen a blossoming of lifestyles that are either minor modifications of the traditional nuclear family (see the discussion on parenting above) or are fairly radical departures from the normal behaviour associated with it. Most of these lifestyles were once stigmatised as deviant and even as indicators of individual pathology but

increasingly they are accepted or even advocated as legitimate choices. A major thrust in these developments has been rapidly changing attitudes towards sexuality. Extra-marital sex is far more accepted and widespread than in earlier decades and so remaining single is a more viable option (Staples, 1982). Homosexuality has received more prominence as a legitimate lifestyle rather than its previous definition as a disease or illness and there is recognition of the need for the acceptance of homosexual people as normal and well adjusted individuals. Homosexual acts have been decriminalised in most states and there are strong advocates for gay and lesbians rights, including their rights to be parents (Royal Commission on Human Relationships, 1977). The commune movement that was prominent in the late 1960s has left a legacy of communes in Australia (Cock, 1979) and aside from these most urban areas in Australia contain households that are comprised of unrelated individuals, with or without children. Indications are that such households will increase in number if housing costs continue to rise and people seek alternatives to traditional family life or are excluded from it (for example single parents, singles, the unemployed). This diversity in lifestyle choices has meant more people live outside the traditional family structure.

It should be noted that despite these changes there are also important continuities in family life: most people in Australia will get married and stay married and most will have and want children and bring them up in a conventional family. Yet confronting choices about sexuality, reproduction, relationships and work patterns is an increasing common aspect of life for Australians. In the past guidelines for making these choices were more clearly defined. Now that marriage, heterosexuality, child bearing, living in a nuclear family are no longer taken-for-granted assumptions, decisions about lifestyles are made in a climate of contradictory and unclearly stated and defined values.

2. The ideology of the family

It is a striking feature of the recent interest in "the family" that there is no agreement on what "the family" is/has been/represents/encompasses. Barrett and McIntosh (1982) dissect this "slippery phenomenon" and suggest that it must be understood in two senses: as a social and economic institution and as an ideology. Broadly speaking there are two functions in the ideological debate over the family: those who call for its decline and those that seek to maintain and promote it. Those calling for the decline of the family (chief in this faction are feminist critics of the family) most commonly refer to the ideology of the family. They see this as maintaining and supporting inequalities of class and gender. Those concerned to defend the family are more concerned with the social and economic institution that they believe is the keystone of both a stable society and individual well-being and happiness. These different uses of the term "family" reflect the fact that the family-defenders feel they are protecting the status quo against the onslaughts that threaten to disrupt traditional family life, while the critics of the family strive to go beyond the institution to reveal the inequalities they believe, 'the family' masks. What are the specific areas of disagreement in the "family debate"?

A major pillar in the 'traditionalists' line of argument is that the family is a 'natural' organisation that is timeless, universal and unchanging (see for example Mount [1982] representative of the 'New Right'; anthropological evidence in the Malinowski [1944] tradition; and recent arguments of sociobiologists like Wilson, [1974]). Another defence of the traditional family has been that it is functionally suited to modern industrial society (Parsons, 1970). This view, that until recently has dominated sociological understanding of the family, holds that the isolated nuclear family was an inevitable development given the shift of production

out of the home that occurred with the industrial revolution. The family then became a specialist agency for the socialisation of children and the fulfilment of individuals' personality needs. A major aspect of the family's functionality was the division of gender roles into expressive (performed by women) and the instrumental (performed by men).

Thus the curvulative argument that the family is natural, biologically determined and eminently functional for modern society means that maintaining a traditional perspective on the family, involves much more than a simple belief in a preferred lifestyle. This is because maintenance of that lifestyle is dependent upon a certain pattern of socialisation and physical and social reproduction, in addition to a highly demarcated social construction of gender. Once these conditions are undermined the assumptions of naturalness and functionality are open to questioning and the family is revealed as an ideology. Deconstruction of the family is evident on several fronts. Thus Anderson (1979: 53) talks of the demystifying of family history and suggests that recent research indicates a far more complex pattern of family organisation and family doctrine than had been assumed previously. The past decade has witnessed the proliferation of research and re-evaluation of non-traditional or alternative lifestyles as legitimate rather than deviant choices (in the U.S.A. an entire journal - Alternative Lifestyles - is devoted to the topic, also see review of research in Macklin, 1980). Further, the family has been analysed as primarily an economic (as opposed to a biological unit) and it is maintained that in its role as a maintainer and reproducer of the labour force it plays a crucial part in capitalist economies (Zaretsky, 1982).

Most significant of all however, in the re-evaluation of the family is the contribution made by the feminist movement in questioning the role of women in the family. The crux of the argument from this movement is

that the unequal position of women is primarily a social construction, that motherhood has been mystified, glorified and made a mandate, that the capitalist system in particular has artificially excluded women from the paid work force, and that women have, as a consequence of these arrangements been placed in a position of dependence and vulnerability. Feminist critics of the family (Thorne and Yalom, 1982; Barrett and McIntosh, 1982) have emphasised the cross-cultural and historical variations in family patterns and others (Barker and Allen, 1976; Chodorow, 1978) have stressed the importance of social organisation in shaping gender arrangements, arguing that the family represents the social organisation of biological functions, and denying that there is or has ever been any monolithic family pattern. A further argument is that the prevalence of a pro-family ideology exerts an undue influence on our society, so that it is saturated with familialism, to the point that every institution is implicitly geared up to the needs of the family (Barrett and McIntosh, 1982). This influence works to the benefit of traditional families, but to the detriment of other lifestyles that receive less social support and approval.

3. Family policy and politics

Family policy is now an essential element of any political agenda, and not surprisingly its application has been interpreted differently by those on opposing sides of the ideological fence. One interpretation sees family policy as a means of supporting the traditional family unit and promotes policies that encourage women to stay at home, increase family involvement in looking after the elderly and disadvantaged and generally seek a return to 'Victorian values' (exemplified by the policies of the Thatcher government in Britain). The rhetoric of the politicians promoting this view tends to make the family an emblem of decency and

stability in the face of a plethora of social evils. By implication this assumption devalues lifestyles that deviate from the traditional model. An alternative view sees family policy as encompassing debates about the preferred arrangement for "sexuality, reproduction, the nurturance and socialisation of children, workforce participation and the performance of domestic labour" (Alexander, 1983: 4). It is no accident that the family is receiving the attention of politicians precisely at a time when the conventional arrangement between the family, the economy and the state is breaking down. The rigid line between work in the formal economy, domestic work and the roles of men and women are diffusing and, as we have seen, lifestyles are changing in response. As these re-negotiations of social and economic life proceed the state has to play a role in stabilising and accommodating the new trends, and so government and political parties have intensified their interest in the family.

In Australia the idea of an explicit family policy has only been aired in recent years (Edgar, 1980). Previously, an explicit policy was unnecessary because the whole fabric of social policies contained and promoted implicit assumptions about the ideal form of family. So, for example Cass (1982: 9) points to the way in which the taxation and welfare systems provide incentive for women to remain outside the market sector and how these systems are designed to favour formal marriage and nuptial children at the expense of de facto relationships and ex-nuptial children. Values relating to the family are inevitably part and parcel of the social policy debate, so it is important that policy-makers formulate policy on the basis of actual social values rather than taking for granted assumptions about what individuals' and groups' values are.

This section has emphasised the centrality of values to any discussion about changes affecting families or policies to deal with the changes. 'The family' conjures up a host of social, moral and religious values concerned with the structure of family life, the role of men and women and sexual behaviour. There is little scope for holding a neutral position on the family; it follows that one important way forward for students of family change is achieving a more comprehensive understanding of how different groups perceive and value different lifestyles. To date studies of values towards the family have not been common, probably because of the difficulties of constructing them, but recognition of their need is increasing (e.g. Lovering, 1981) and there are examples of them in other countries like Britain (Study Commission on the Family, 1982; Clark and Samphier, 1983a, 1983b). The following section establishes the validity of studying the values of professional workers.

Why study Social Workers and Doctors?

The target groups for this particular study are general practitioners, social workers, and medical and social work students. Why were these two professions chosen? Both are frequently confronted with people at times of crisis, at periods in their lives when they are making choices about the direction of their lives. Literature on non-traditional lifestyles has suggested that individuals in these professions have a tendency to view the intact nuclear family as a preferred way of life and, as a consequence, to devalue lifestyles that do not conform to this model. For example Veevers (1980) points to the special difficulties that are faced by voluntarily childless women when dealing with a pronatalist doctor. It has been noted that single parent families are often referred to, in the professional literature (including social work and medicine), "as

'broken homes', or atypical, disintegrated, incomplete or disorganised families, leading to a pathological anxiety that can colour the response of professionals" (Popay et al., 1983). Recently there has been a growing body of literature advocating sympathetic counselling for gay and lesbian clients (e.g. Babuscio, 1976; Hart and Richardson, 1981). Other evidence suggests that G.P.s may play a part in supporting traditional family patterns by, for instance, legitimising and endorsing the conventional status quo on the position of women through their advice in the consulting room (Barrett and Roberts, 1978). Wilson (1978: 174) maintains that social workers are trained to support family life and so, for instance, encourage battered women to stay with their husbands and receive counselling, therapy and support rather than to consider separation.

A review of medical and social work professional literature reveals that there are relatively few articles or books that deal with the issues professionals face when working with patients/clients in non-traditional lifestyles. Phillips (1983) comments in relation to psychotherapists that most of their training contrives to reflect the assumption that most clients will be living in traditional family forms and that only scant attention is given to variations on this form. Despite the obvious importance of the values and attitudes of doctors and social workers to their interpretation of their clients/patients' problems, there is little research or concern with understanding their value orientation.

Studying family values

Two methodologies were used, in-depth interviews using the repertory grid method and a postal questionnaire survey. The pilot samples used consisted of 13 social workers, 10 social work students and 10 medical students who were interviewed, and 27 general practitioners, who received a questionnaire. Although this method does not conform to rigorous

research design, the study was a pilot, preoccupied with the range of views and values, rather than their extent. Various factors dictated the decision to use two methods. The study was designed to achieve several things: to gauge the range of opinions on the research variables, to highlight patterns and connections between attitudes and values towards different lifestyles and to assess the feasibility of conducting a larger scale survey based on a postal questionnaire survey. So while combining two methods limits the scope for comparison, it did allow experimentation with two approaches. The problem of comparison was not paramount either, because that aspect of the research would be more prominent in the full survey. Additionally it was felt that G.P.s would be more willing to co-operate in a survey that they could complete at their leisure in a relatively short period of time, rather than in a lengthy interview that required booking an appointment.

The two groups of students were volunteers in the relevant disciplines at Flinders University. The social workers were randomly selected from the list of supervisors that are used in field placements in the Department of Social Administration at Flinders University - 13 of the 15 approached agreed to co-operate. The doctors were randomly selected from the list of medical practitioners in the 'yellow pages'. Questionnaires were sent to 52. Of those who replied, four refused to co-operate and eight had to be excluded because they were not in general practice. 27 forms were available for analysis, representing a response rate of 61.3%.

The choice of topics for inclusion in the questionnaire was dictated by the concerns highlighted in the previous section. The areas covered were bringing up children, marriage and divorce, reproductive decisions, sexuality and comparisons of different lifestyles. The questionnaire comprised primarily fixed choice questions but allowed for

any open-ended comments the respondents might like to make. The in-depth interviews were all tape-recorded and fully transcribed. The data they yielded was far more detailed than that from the questionnaire. Of particular note was the material from the repertory grid analysis. This method has been adapted from therapy practice (Bannister and Fransella, 1971) but its success in this project indicates that it has great potential for sociological research. In essence the repertory grid allows you to formalise individuals' thought processes. There are many variations on the technique but its core is presenting to the interviewee three 'elements' and asking him/her to think of any way at all that they think any two of the elements are like each other and the third one is different revealing their relevant construct. Anything at all can be an 'element'. In this study they were descriptions of ten different lifestyles: married couple with two children and with no children by choice, single parent with two children, lesbian couple with and without children, de facto couple with and without children, extended family, shared house with adults and children, and a single person living on their own. The elements were supplied because it was important to be able to compare each interviewee's constructs. Each of the ten lifestyles was written on a card. Combinations of three cards were presented until no new constructs were given. The constructs were written down one side of a grid that had the ten lifestyles (elements) across the top. At the end of the interview the respondents were asked to rank each lifestyle according to their own constructs. For example, if they had differentiated lifestyles by saying that some were more stable than others, the construct would be stable/unstable and they would rate each lifestyle according to this construct on a 1 to 9 scale.

The chief advantage of this method was that the respondents were given a framework that enabled their comments to be based on their own constructs of the selected lifestyles, rather than on those of the researcher. A great deal of information was collected from this procedure and only a small amount will be used in this paper. It should be recorded that the method has considerable potential for in-depth investigation of individuals' values. It has value for both the researcher who wishes to gain a fairly detailed picture of an individual's set of values and to individuals who want to explore their own attitudes and values towards different lifestyles (several respondents spontaneously commented that they were struck by how the exercise helped them structure their thoughts).

The aggregated material from the grid exercise provides a view of the criteria individuals use to evaluate lifestyles; what they consider are the important distinguishing features between them and provides a starting point for building a theory to explain differences in values towards lifestyles. Approximately 80 constructs emerged from all the grids and following analysis these were grouped in to eight sections: social acceptance, extent of responsibility, loneliness and support, freedom, amount of negotiation, amount of conflict, emotional commitment, relation to the wider community. Beyond these basic "pillars" there were a number of general patterns. These will be summarised to provide a snapshot view of the potential of the grid.

Analysis of the grids showed that homosexual relationships are viewed as the least socially accepted lifestyle, especially when children are involved. The traditional nuclear family is felt to be the most accepted. Families with children are seen as the most restricted, with more responsibility, emotional commitment and conflict than those

without. Single-parent families were strongly associated with responsibility, lack of freedom, severe time constraint, high levels of commitment and in need of strong external support. People living on their own are perceived as having most freedom but also most loneliness. Shared houses and extended families emerged as the most supportive structures and as those that could be most self-sufficient in relation to the outside world. The non-traditional lifestyles were felt to need more negotiation, so living together generally seen as requiring more discussion and working out than marriage, homosexual relations more than heterosexual and shared houses as more than the traditional family. Traditional lifestyles are perceived as being able to take more for granted, require less negotiation of roles and involve more obligation and duty, than willingness and choice. Some important differences between respondents emerged from the repertory grid; these will be elaborated in the conclusion.

The pilot study was successful in testing methodologies and in providing a detailed body of data from which the second stage of the research could be formulated. The remainder of the paper will describe the main findings from the pilot and present tentative conclusions.

Marriage, Living Together and Divorce

A crucial aspect of the survey was the changing face of marriage; the topic was an important component of both surveys. The G.P.s were asked a straight forward question on how they believed young people regarded marriage; most (17, 62.9%) felt less seriously, only 1 (3.7%) more seriously and 8 (29.6%) felt "about the same". A further indication of their feelings was provided in their responses to 'why are more marriages ending in divorce?' This issue was also discussed in the interview survey. Clear themes emerged from the responses.

There was a widespread feeling that the relative ease of obtaining a divorce since the introduction of the Family Law Act increased its popularity. Respondents often recognised that this legal change reflected a shift in social attitudes and a freedom from family, social and religious sanctions. There was a feeling, as one social worker put it, that "marriage is no longer the institution it was". Another key factor in the increase in divorce was felt to be the changing role of women, that has given them more job opportunities and financial independence. G.P.s tended to view this development negatively: for example one commented: "Too much freedom and alternatives available to the female consort resulting in an unwillingness to compromise". Others saw women working as a cause of divorce. Some were more neutral in their comments: but very few of the G.P.s saw moves towards female emancipation in the positive way some of the social workers or medical students did. An important factor in this could be the sex and age differences of the samples (Tables 1 and 2).

TABLE 1 and 2 in here

Typical views from the medical students were that "more women are realising that there's more in life than being married" and "women have very changed expectations of what their life should be, more realistic and the right ones, and the structure within which those expectations exist, the nuclear structure, can't accommodate the aspirations". These views were echoed by a majority of the social workers, who made comments like "women are more outspoken and not putting up with distressing situations" or "before in a lot of cases, women stayed there for the sake of staying there, they're more aware now of their rights and resources".

A message that came clearly from the G.P.s was that rising divorce rates reflected an "unwillingness and/or inability to work at developing a good relationship". Factors contributing to this were seen as "lack of communication", "inadequate preparation for marriage", "lack of tolerance, immaturity and selfishness". The social workers were more likely to see divorce as a legitimate problem solving device. Most felt divorce is preferable to an unhappy marriage and that its increasing acceptance has resulted in people escaping very unsatisfactory situations. A majority of the social workers, a few of the G.P.s and medical students believed the high divorce rate reflects, in part, people's false expectations of marriage. People (encouraged by the media, church, schools and their parents) expect marriage to fulfill all their needs and have an "over-romanticised" picture of it.

Increasing economic and social pressures and the rapid rate of change characteristic of our society were also felt to account for divorce. For instance, some social workers highlighted the strain put on relationships by unemployment, while G.P.s were prone to attribute divorce to a general "lowering" of social standards, defined in terms of a more permissive society, with more sexual promiscuity, less religious belief, devaluation of the mothering role and a general lowering of moral standards.

Cohabitation was a further topic of discussion. A number of G.P.s appeared (from the comments they added to their forms) to see living together as a preliminary to marriage. Some stated that this could prove beneficial in allowing maturation before marriage. Answers to the specific questions on this topic are provided in table 3. These show that the

TABLE 3 in here

majority of G.P.s believe having children outside marriage is problematic, anticipate that de facto couples will have problems with their parents,

believe the couple will be insecure and see the relationship as different from that of a married couple. The interview data showed a confusion of views on cohabitation. While there was a strong feeling that an intimate relationship is primarily defined between a couple, so that being legally married or not should make little difference, the view that social expectations in favour of marriage are powerful and so can affect the internal dynamics of a relationship was also put forward. However the repertory grid data suggests that of all non-traditional lifestyles, cohabitation is felt to receive the greatest social approval. In fact when no children are involved only a slight difference was identified between it and marriage. Younger respondents were likely to see and approve of cohabitation as a means of avoiding rigid sex-role behaviour that they associated with marriage. Certainly a majority of all the groups believed de facto couples stood a better chance of establishing an equal relationship. The overall impression is that with the exception of a few respondents who held very traditional values, cohabitation is identified as only marginally different from marriage.

Bringing up children

The issue of children is crucial to any discussion of family life. Most respondents believe that parents today face a harder task than they have in the past. For instance 20 (74%) G.P.s felt bringing up children today is more difficult than 20 years ago. What factors provide a happy childhood? Material factors like housing, pleasant environment and education were rated less important than emotional ones like security and consistency (possible they are taken for granted). G.P.s rated having a happily married mother and father as important, while the interviewed respondent put more stress on having the constant presence of at least one caring adult throughout childhood.

The advantages and disadvantages that were associated with each lifestyle by at least some of the respondents in the study are summarised in Table 4. Most of this material emanates from the repertory

TABLE 4 in here

grid exercise, but it also reflects the G.P.s feelings towards single-parents and homosexuals as parents. A few of the respondents felt the advantages of the nuclear family outweighed those they associated with other lifestyles, but a more common view was that all lifestyles had pros and cons and the most crucial factor was the parenting skills of the individual. All the medical students and approximately half of the social workers attached the proviso to their responses about homosexual parents that they had little experience with the situation. G.P.s evaluated single-parent families negatively (see Table 5) except in the sense

TABLE 5 in here

that a majority feel children in these families develop close bonds with their parents. They gave little support to homosexuals as parents (Table 6) but there was a strong feeling that they should be allowed to

TABLE 6 in here

work with children.

A general pattern of feelings relating to bringing up children was that if the respondent viewed the traditional nuclear family favourably and were unable to identify disadvantages associated with it, then they were likely to evaluate the other lifestyles (with the exception of the

extended family) in a negative way. In these cases the non-traditional structures were felt to be 'second-best' and deficient in the type of environment they could offer children.

It was mentioned that any lifestyle that deviates from the 'normal' situation has to win acceptance, whereas the nuclear family starts off from a position of acceptance. This point was well illustrated by some social workers' responses to a question about the characteristics they would look for in a potential adoptive home. While many would consider alternatives to the nuclear family as a possible candidate (judging them on criteria like parenting skills and motivation for wanting to adopt) it was often mentioned that placing a child in an "alternative" family is much more of a risk than doing so in a "normal" home. People would tend to automatically blame any breakdown on the structure in the unusual situation, but not do this in the case of the nuclear family. This suggests there are constraints on the behaviour of professional workers, whatever their own values might be.

Childbearing Decision

A central tenet of the traditional view of family life is that children are an essential part of a happy marriage. Acceptance of voluntary childlessness was tested in both surveys. The results from the G.P.'s survey ~~are~~ presented in table 7. Generally they accept

TABLE 7 in here

traditional beliefs about children (they make life more satisfying, parents are likely to enjoy life more than the childless, children do not impede the closeness of a couple's relationship). But there is no overwhelming support for the notion of childlessness as having undesirable effects on

the individuals opting to be so. Thus while 12 (46.1%) agree with the view that a woman is likely to feel unfulfilled unless she becomes a mother 11 (42.3%) disagree, and 13 (50%) of those replying disagree that a man is likely to be insecure with his masculinity unless he becomes a father. Only 5 (19.2%) agree that a childless woman is more likely to be neurotic than a mother, and a majority reject the idea that childlessness leads to loneliness in later life.

The interviewers were asked why they felt people were motivated to remain childless. The replies suggest that childlessness is accepted as a legitimate choice for people who either want to develop some other aspect of their life (career or a hobby) or for those who do not feel suited to parenthood. A minority viewpoint was that childless people are selfish or have a fear of the responsibilities imposed by parenthood. A further point of discussion was over the likely results of remaining childless. Again a mixture of positive and negative outcomes was envisaged. On the one hand the freedom and ability to develop an unusually close couple relationship was stressed and on the other a few cited the dangers of loneliness in later life and more often missing out on the satisfactions of child rearing.

In the interview survey respondents were asked why they thought people wanted to have children. Social expectations and pressure figured prominently in the accounts, to the extent that some suggested that most people do not think about whether or not to have children, they just automatically accept it as part and parcel of marriage, and as 'natural' behaviour. This motive was particularly imputed to women. More positively respondents mentioned the intrinsic pleasures of becoming a parent: watching the development of the child, emotional

satisfaction, the fulfilling of an 'innate' urge to reproduce, feeling a purpose in life and sense of continuity and links with the past and future. Selfish reasons mentioned were someone to look after you in old age and self indulgence in producing someone who is part of you. Interestingly none of the respondents were surprised at the question about motives for child bearing, suggesting a belief that it was a legitimate area for decision-making. A fairly common theme was that people should be encouraged to consider the pros and cons of having children before they go ahead and reproduce.

The grid exercise emphasised that for many individuals children are seen as making a more forceful impact on individuals lives than either their choice of sexual orientation, whether they live alone or as a couple, or as a married or de facto couple. Those who adopt a more traditional perspective on the family, however, appear more likely to see marriage and sexual orientation as crucial variables.

Sexuality

The G.P.'s values in this area are summarised in table 8. An

TABLE 8 in here

acceptance of pre-marital sex is evident, only 2 felt it was 'almost always wrong'. Feelings about extra marital sex are more ambiguous, but there is less support for this. Most interestingly homosexuality receives more approval than extra marital sex. 15 (60%) of those that replied felt it was wrong only sometimes or not wrong at all. More information on homosexuality was sought in a question dealing with its aetiology. Most strikingly only one felt homosexuality was a

disease. 13 (48.1%) regarded it as an aberrant behaviour pattern and 13 (48.1%) as a normal variant like lefthandedness. Only a small number of G.P.'s. (3) hold the view that homosexuality and extra-marital sex are always wrong. There is a high degree of correlation between disapproval or approval of each of these. The overall pattern of responses suggests that there is a minority group who hold traditional views on sexual behaviour and view deviations from this in a very negative light.

Homosexuality was discussed in the interviews. The general feeling was of acceptance (with a few dissensions). Relationships among gays and lesbians were, on the whole, perceived of as of equal worth and value to heterosexual ones. The main problem associated with homosexuality was perceived as the general lack of social acceptance for it. This was seen as a stumbling block to placing children for adoption in a homosexual home, as posing a threat to the mental stability of the homosexuals (as one medical student commented 'gays and lesbians are almost certainly going to carry the scars of the conflicts they've been through'), and generally as a major barrier to gay and lesbian people living a 'normal' life.

Conclusion - Patterns of values

To answer the initial question of this paper, Nuclear family - No Thanks?, it seems that this view represents only a small proportion of this pilot sample. More commonly people view the nuclear family as one of a range of lifestyles that individuals can choose from. However the ideological hegemony of the nuclear family is recognised, to the extent that individuals who fully accept variations from it, feel they have to modify their view because of the absence of social

support and social approval for the variation. Thus while an individual might value homosexual relationships on an equal basis with heterosexual ones and believe single parent families can offer advantages to children, the lack of social approval for homosexuality and adequate social support for single parents result in people modifying their acceptance of these lifestyles.

In this sample there was a group whose values to the traditional family would most accurately be summarised as Nuclear family - yes please! A striking feature that emerged was the extent to which evaluations of the nuclear family were associated with those towards non-traditional lifestyles. Put crudely this means that individuals who place a high value on the traditional family with the father as main breadwinner and mother as caregiver, also believe that other lifestyles that deviate from this are unable to provide for people's needs as effectively and efficiently as the nuclear family. The other side to the coin is that people who are more critical of the traditional family and believe that it can have deleterious effects, also maintain that other lifestyles (despite disadvantages) can provide a satisfactory, fulfilling and happy way of life and that there is nothing inherently flawed about them. Table 9 summarises the differences in attitudes between those with a traditional and those with a

TABLE 9 in here

non-traditional orientation to the family. Clearly the family for 'traditionalists' is a shorthand term for a system that dictates a certain pattern of sexual behaviour, gender division of labour and lifecycle choices. Maintenance of this system is felt to depend on

the promotion of traditional family life as the preferred lifestyle. This finding lends support to the Barrett and McIntosh (1982) thesis that the dominance of the family is inherently anti-social because it automatically devalues other lifestyles that seek to provide the loving and caring normally associated with families.

It is not possible to make statements about the incidence of each of these orientations among the different groups in the sample, because the numbers involved are small. However it can be said that there were examples of individuals whose values conformed to both orientations in all the groups. Age may be a crucial variable as older people are more likely to have a traditional orientation. Some individuals were less clearly located in one or other orientation, having ambiguous views on some issues. This study has shown that there is a wide variation in values relating to the family within the professions studied.

Values are no guide to behaviour, but it is a fair assumption that those with a traditional orientation would have very different feelings about a divorced single mother living with another man, from those of an individual whose values conform to the non-traditional orientation. In any situation where a client/patient has an unconventional lifestyle the perception of the professional will be coloured by her/his values about the family. Clients/patients may not be sufficiently aware that the advice they receive is, in part at least, a reflection of the professional's personal value system, which maybe a more important determinant of how successfully a professional can help a client than are his/her formal qualifications. A confirmed heterosexual with little sympathy for homosexuality, (or vis a versa),

is likely to make a poor job of counselling a bewildered teenager who is working out his/her sexual identity. The question of what we, as a society can do to alleviate the problems stemming from differing value orientations, is a question that must be faced. In the case of professional health and social workers a starting point is the recognition that these workers are not value-free technicians, but rather witting or unwitting advocates of a certain way of seeing the world, that in turn dictates evaluations of different lifestyles as better/worse, good/bad or whatever other criteria are used.

The case of G.P.'s and social workers and the differences of value-orientation among them, underlines the argument made in the introductory sections of the paper that a crucial question for the policy agenda of the future will be studies of values and their impact. Decisions will have to be faced by governments, institutions and individuals as to how value differences are handled. These decisions are made more pressing as social and economic changes move us further away from taken-for-granted assumptions about the organisation of personal and work lives. Key questions will be: What values are at stake? How can value conflicts be resolved? To what extent does promotion of one set of values entail sacrifice of others? Is it desirable that the values of the less powerful groups in our community compete with those of the most powerful and is so how? If values are changing should we ensure that influential groups in society (like doctors and social workers) are not out of step with the wider community? If so how could this be achieved? Of course many of these questions are rhetorical and their worth lies in the debate they generate rather than in any solutions that might be found in their response. What is certain is that such questions will achieve more currency as both traditional and non-traditional values come under scrutiny.

TABLE 1

SEX OF PILOT SAMPLE

<u>Sample</u>	<u>Sex</u>	
	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
G.P.s	27	0
Social Workers	3	11
Social Work Students	1	9
Medical Students	6	4
Total	37	24

TABLE 2

AGE OF PILOT SAMPLE

<u>Sample</u>	<u>Age</u>				
	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+
G.P.s	2	8	10	3	3
Social Workers	4	8	2	-	-
Social Work Students	5	5	-	-	-
Medical Students	3	2	-	-	-
Total	19	23	12	3	3

TABLE 3

G.P.'s ATTITUDES TOWARDS COHABITATION

Results of Cohabitation	Very likely or likely		Uncertain		Very unlikely or unlikely		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Insecurity between the couple	14	51.9	5	18.5	8	29.6	27	100
Relationship problems for couple	11	40.7	8	29.6	8	29.6	27	100
No different from a married couple	6	23.0	7	26.9	13	50.0	26*	100
A more equal relationship	14	51.9	6	22.2	7	25.9	27	100
Problems with parents	17	68.0	3	12.0	5	20.0	25**	100
More satisfactory relationship than most married couples	7	25.9	6	22.2	14	51.9	27	100
Problems if they have children	19	70.3	6	22.2	2	7.4	27	100

* 1 G.P. did not answer this question

** 2 G.P.s did not answer this question

TABLE 4
SUMMARY OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF DIFFERENT
LIFESTYLES FOR CHILDREN

Lifestyle	Advantages	Disadvantages
Traditional nuclear family	Social approval (especially for child with peer group and teachers) and social support. Can be very successful if the mother and father are content with their role. Offers stability if parents stay together. Clear examples of sex-role.	Can be many for women who become discontented with the limited role they are expected to fulfill - they can become lonely and isolated. Father can feel alienated from children because of limited contact compared with mother. Encourages traditional attitudes towards the opposite sex. Unequal balance of power. Too intense for good emotional climate.
Extended family	Support for parents. Isolation of nuclear family alleviated. More adults to spend time with children and give free time to parents. Children learn respect for older people, and the latter are given a role.	Possible conflict between parents and grandparents over discipline and appropriate behaviour from children. Grandparents may find children stressful and not want daily contact with them. May find they are over-burdened with babysitting. Caring burden for younger generation as grandparents age.
Shared house (unrelated adults and children)	Wider choice of role models for children to learn from. More support, help with child care and social contact for parents, so less stress and strain on them. Children less sheltered so likely to be more open and confident. Financial savings.	Potential for instability and conflict, particularly if there is a large turnover of people. Conflict over styles of child rearing. Some adults may not be responsible. Difficulties ensuring sufficient privacy. More negotiation of expectations than in smaller households. Children may feel 'different' from peer group.

TABLE 4 (cont.)

Lifestyle	Advantages	Disadvantages
Single parent	Parent and child able to develop close bond. No conflict over styles of child-rearing. Clear authority source. No exposure to marital conflict. Children likely to develop more self-discipline and self-reliance. Some single parents spent more time and give more attention to children than in two-parent family.	Insecurity and instability (especially if parent seeking a new partner and has a series of relationships). Lack of role model of both sexes. Financial difficulties. Heavy burden on parent: no sharing of responsibilities, no one to consult, has to meet all demands of child, loneliness, difficult to get a break from situation. Lack of community support and facilities because society is geared up for two-parent families.
Homosexual parents	Homosexual couples who have stayed together despite social pressures must be very committed and so offer a secure and stable background for children. No reason why they should not be as loving, caring and responsible as heterosexual parents.	Social disapproval and discrimination. Considerable problems for child with peer group. Lack of role models of both sexes. Little exposure to heterosexuality, and this could confuse child when they try to come to terms with sexuality. Lesbian household might be anti-male in which case problems for a male child. Unstable relationships. Problems of step parenting/adoptive parents/ A.I.D. parents depending on relation of child to parent.

TABLE 5

G.P.s ATTITUDES TOWARDS SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES

Outcomes	Very likely or likely		Uncertain		Very unlikely or unlikely		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not very different from a 2-parent family	4	14.8	2	7.4	21	77.7	27	100
Emotional insecurity	19	70.3	6	22.2	2	7.4	27	100
Financial insecurity	19	70.3	6	22.2	2	7.4	27	100
Educational disadvantage	16	59.2	5	18.5	6	22.2	27	100
Behaviour problems	22	81.4	4	14.8	1	3.7	27	100
Closer rela- tions with parent	13	48.1	8	29.6	6	22.2	27	100
A more mature outlook on life	8	29.6	9	33.3	10	37.0	27	100

TABLE 6

G.P.s ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMOSEXUALITY

Statements on Homosexuality	Strongly Agree or Agree		Uncertain		Strongly Disagree or Disagree		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A male homosexual couple who have been living together for five years should be eligible to adopt a child	3	11.1	3	11.1	21	77.7	27	100
A lesbian couple who have been living together for five years should be eligible to adopt a child	4	14.8	2	7.4	21	77.7	27	100
Homosexual people should not be able to work in jobs where they come into regular contact with children, e.g. teaching	2	7.4	3	11.1	22	81.4	27	100
Homosexual couples should be able to go through a marriage ceremony in the same way as heterosexual couples	12	44.4	1	3.7	14	51.9	27	100
Children reared by homosexual couples are likely to have more emotional problems than children reared by heterosexual couples	14	53.8	8	30.7	4	15.4	26*	100
Homosexuality is a threat to the stability of the family system	8	30.7	4	15.4	14	53.8	26*	100

* One G.P. did not answer these questions

TABLE 7

G.P.s ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHILDLESSNESS

Statement on Childlessness	Strongly Agree or Agree		Uncertain		Strongly Disagree or Disagree		Total *	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A woman is likely to feel unfulfilled unless she becomes a mother	12	46.1	3	11.5	11	42.3	26	100
A man is likely to be insecure with his masculinity unless he 'proves' himself by becoming a father	8	30.7	5	19.2	13	50.0	26	100
Having a child gets in the way of the closeness and intimacy of a couple's relationship	5	19.2	3	11.5	18	69.2	26	100
People who are childless are more likely to be lonely in their older years than people who have had children	16	61.5	3	11.5	7	26.9	26	100
People who decide not to have children are very courageous in taking that decision	9	38.4	4	15.3	13	50.0	26	100
A childless woman is likely to be more neurotic than a mother	5	19.2	7	26.9	14	53.8	26	100
Childless couples are likely to enjoy life more than parents	3	11.5	8	30.7	15	57.6	26	100
Parents are likely to find life more satisfying than childless couples	15	57.6	4	15.3	7	26.9	26	100

* One G.P. did not answer these questions.

TABLE 8

G.P.s ATTITUDES TOWARDS DIFFERENT SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

	Sexual Behaviour					
	Pre-marital Sex		Extra-marital		Homosexual ^a	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Always wrong	0	0	3	11.1	3	12
Almost always wrong	2	7.4	12	44.4	7	28
Wrong only sometimes	14	51.8	11	40.7	7	28
Not wrong at all	11	40.7	1	3.7	8	32
Total	27	100	27	100	25	100

^a 2 did not reply to this question

TABLE 9

VALUE ORIENTATION TOWARDS FAMILIES AND OTHER LIFESTYLES

	Traditional Orientation	Non-Traditional Orientation
Nuclear family	Believe the nuclear family is the best structure for bringing up children and ensuring they are emotionally balanced and secure.	The nuclear family felt to offer some advantages, as long as the participants are happy with their role, but it is acknowledged that it can also create problems (isolation and imposed gender role divisions) and so should not be seen as an ideal model, but rather as an option.
Marriage	Marriage felt to be important and to be under attack. Cohabitation acceptable as a prelude to marriage and provided no children are involved. Divorce disapproved of and its cause felt to be lack of persistence and 'staying power' on behalf of individuals.	Marriage accepted as an option that is valuable if it is of significance to the two people involved. Cohabitation more or less accepted on the same terms as marriage. No stigma attached to it. Divorce felt to be one resolution for marital conflict and preferable to an unhappy marriage.
Gender roles	Women's roles defined within the domestic sphere and women believed to be most suited for child-care. Women should only work part-time, and only when their children are of school age. Men play a peripheral role in child care. Division of labour with male as breadwinner, female as carer is believed to be 'natural' and desirable.	Men and women perceived as equally capable of child care. Working mothers perceived as more satisfied and fulfilled than full-time housewives. Division of labour by gender felt to be a social construction.
Children	Children felt to "make a marriage" and be one of life's chief satisfactions. Wanting and having children taken as an indication of healthy development. Voluntarily childless individuals seen as selfish and likely to regret the decision in old age.	Children not essential for a happy relationship. Feeling that people often have them because of social pressure. Childlessness a valid option, perceived as having particularly negative consequences, but as having advantages for those who take the decision after full consideration.

TABLE 9 (cont.)

	Traditional Orientation	Non-Traditional Orientation
Sexuality	Non-acceptance of homosexuality. Possibly tolerance of it as an aberrant behaviour, but no acceptance of it as normal. Parenting by male or female homosexuals disapproved of. General disapproval of pre- and extra-marital sex.	Acceptance of homosexuality as part of the normal range of sexual behaviour. Belief that homosexuals can make lasting relationships and be as successful at parenting as heterosexuals. Open minded attitude to pre- and extra-marital sex, depends on circumstances.
Non-traditional Lifestyles	'Alternative' family structures for bringing up children found wanting compared to the nuclear or extended family. Tendency to make use of stereotypes and deficit models in analysing them. For instance all single-parent families believed to offer an unhealthy developmental environment for children, and inability to isolate advantages of them.	Variations from the nuclear family evaluated on their own merits, and not inherently, believed to be inferior. They may be perceived as prob- lematic in that they receive less social accep- tance than the nuclear family, and less support in a society that is geared up to the traditional family. Some advantages associated with all lifestyles.

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Divorce in Australia 1971-1981: An examination of period analysis

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Introduction

The increase in the incidence of divorce in Australia since the early 1970s, and in particular the large upsurge in the number of divorces following the enactment of the Family Law Act of 1975, has received a great deal of attention. In the course of the public discussion many statistics, some misleading, have been cited. The aim of this paper is to use period analysis to examine not only the changing frequency of divorce but also to compare divorce patterns in terms of age, duration of marriage, and number of children. To the extent possible, other characteristics such as country of birth, state of residence, and religion will also be examined.

The paper will focus on divorces granted in 1971, 1976, and 1981, the census years for which detailed information on the population at risk, that is the married population, is available. In 1976, 47,510 divorces were granted under the new Family Law Act (FLA) and an additional 15,720 were granted under the Matrimonial Causes Act (MCA) - the last divorces to be granted under the old act. This permits a comparison of MCA divorces in 1971 and 1976 with FLA divorces in 1976 and 1981.

The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1959, which came into effect in February 1961, provided the first national legis-

lation governing marital dissolution. Previously divorces had been granted under state laws which varied throughout Australia. Under the MCA there were 14 grounds on which divorce could be granted, 13 of which were based on marital fault. The fourteenth ground, a period of separation of five years, which was previously only recognised as a ground for divorce in Western Australia, did not imply marital fault and was the subject of most of the public debate surrounding the introduction of the MCA.

The Family Law Act of 1975, which took effect in January 1976, changed completely the grounds for divorce, recognising the 'irretrievable breakdown of the marriage' as evidenced by a period of separation of one year as the sole ground for divorce. By dispensing with the concept of marital fault and guilty parties, the new act eliminated a good deal of the social stigma that was associated with divorce. Procedures were intended to be simpler and less expensive.

The introductions of both the MCA and the FLA were accompanied by predictions of large increases in the number of divorces. After some rather high levels of divorce in the immediate post-war period, divorce rates were relatively constant in the 1950s and 1960s. The introduction of the MCA

TABLE 1 in here

in 1961 was not followed by a dramatic increase in the divorce rate. This contrasts quite sharply with the dramatic increase in the divorce rate in 1976 with the introduction of the FLA. It should, however, be noted that the divorce rate was increasing steadily before 1976 and the exceptionally high number of divorces granted in 1976 decreased

each year until 1980 when it began to increase once again.

Age and Duration of Marriage

With the changes in the legislation governing divorce and the increase in the number of divorces, the patterns of divorce by age and by duration of marriage also underwent changes. Divorce rates for married males and females

TABLE 2 in here

were consistently higher at every age for those divorcing under the FLA as compared to those divorcing under the MCA. More importantly, the greatest increase occurred in the age group under 25 years. For males the rates for this youngest age group were almost six times higher for those divorcing under the FLA while for females the rates were five times higher. For the next age group, 25-29 years, the increase was three and a half times for males and almost three times for females, much closer to the overall increase for all durations.

Between 1971 and 1976 there was little change in the divorce rates for those over 45 years of age divorcing under the MCA. However, in comparing the FLA divorce rates in 1976 and 1981, there was a decrease in the divorce rate in the older age groups. The explanation of both of these changes, in the younger and in the older age groups, can be found in changing patterns of divorce by duration of marriage.

TABLE 3 in here

Under the MCA, both in 1971 and 1976,

relatively few divorces occurred within the first five years of marriage. This pattern changed dramatically with the introduction of the FLA; the divorce rate for marriage durations 0-4 years increased almost eight times. This change accounts for the increase, as noted in Table 2, in the divorce rate for married males and females under age 25 who, especially the males, made up a high proportion of those married for less than five years.

It might be assumed that the relatively low divorce rates for the first five years of marriage under the MCA were due to the need for a period of at least five years separation in order to obtain a divorce without having to prove matrimonial fault. However, the proportion of divorces granted on the ground of separation did not exceed 17 per cent in 1971 and declined to 13 per cent in 1975.

Despite the great increase in the divorce rate under the FLA for duration of 0-4 years of marriage, the highest divorce rates continued to occur at durations of 5-9 years throughout the entire period considered regardless of the legislation under which the divorces were granted.

When the FLA came into effect in 1976, a good number of deferred divorces occurred. Some couples whose marriages had broken down long ago had postponed divorcing in order to take advantage of the simpler and more dignified procedures offered by the FLA. Others, who may never have formalized a divorce under the old legislation now also did so. Together, these divorces increased the divorce rate for the marriages of longer durations. This rate, however, had decreased by 1981.

These deferred divorces also explain the parallel decrease in divorce rates for persons above 45 years of age when comparing 1976 and 1981 FLA divorce rates in Table 2. It should be noted here that census data on duration of marriage refer only to the now married women excluding the married but permanently separated women. No information on duration of marriage is collected for men. The age-specific and duration-specific rates are not, therefore, strictly comparable. This limitation in the census data renders them less useful than they might be for the analysis of marital dissolution.

Given the important change in divorce patterns by duration of marriage and the effect of marriage duration on age-specific divorce rates, it is of interest to examine divorce patterns by age controlling for (that is, eliminating the effect of) duration of marriage. The technique of indirect standardization provides a method of doing this.

TABLE 4 in here

Duration-specific divorce rates were calculated for 1971, 1976 (for the MCA and FLA divorces separately) and for 1981. These rates were then applied to married women by duration of marriage in each age group. This calculation generated the number of 'expected' divorces for each age group, assuming the duration-specific divorce rates at that age were the same as for women of all ages. The actual, observed, divorces were then compared to the expected divorces. If the age group had more divorces than would have been expected, the ratio exceeded unity (100 in the table) thus indicating

a higher level of divorce for that particular age group than the overall average applying to that year. With the exception of 1976, for which the same married population was used for both the MCA and FLA duration-specific divorce rates, ratios are comparable only within a given year. They are, however, not strictly comparable from one year to another since different populations are used in each case.

The ratios shown in Table 4 indicate that the incidence of divorce was highest in all three years among married women aged 20-29 years. However, in 1976 under the MCA, the ratio for women aged 20-24 was by far the highest. In contrast, in 1981 there was very little difference between the incidence of divorce of women aged 20-24 and those aged 25-29 years.

It should be noted that women aged 50-54 had a particularly high ratio of observed to expected divorces under the FLA in 1976. This age group undoubtedly included many women who deferred divorcing until the FLA came into effect.

Family Size

In comparing patterns of divorce by the number of children we have to realize that family size - like age - is affected by the duration of marriage. It is, therefore, useful to use indirect standardisation to control for marriage duration.

TABLE 5 in here

The incidence of divorce decreases as family size increases in all three years shown in Table 5. Couples without

children and those with only one child are far more likely to divorce than those with larger families.

Data on number of children -- unlike age data -- present a number of difficulties, which should be kept in mind when interpreting this table.

In the three censuses a relatively large proportion of married women did not respond to the question on number of children. It may be assumed with some confidence that many of these women had no children. For this reason the ratios in the table are calculated in two ways. In the first calculation women of not stated parity were ignored. In the second calculation women of not stated parity were assumed to be childless women. The result of this second calculation is shown in brackets.

In addition to the aforementioned difficulty, the table presents other problems as well. The number of children recorded in divorce statistics refers to the dependent children. The MCA defined dependent children as those under 21 years of age while the FLA defined them as under 18 years of age. Older children are therefore excluded from the divorce statistics. The census, however, collected data on all children ever born regardless of age and whether or not they are still living. A further complication in comparability is the fact that the 1971 and 1976 censuses collected information on children of the current marriage while in 1981 the question referred to total issue. The effect of the discrepancy between the divorce statistics and census data (more than the change in definition of issue from one census to another) undoubtedly overestimates the ratios at low parity and

underestimates those at high parities. Although the conclusions concerning the overall pattern of divorces by family size are not invalidated, the ratios should not be taken as exact values.

Selected Social and Cultural Characteristics

Various social and cultural factors influence divorce patterns. Using period analysis based on census data the variation in incidence of divorces can be analysed according to country of birth, state of residence, and religion. Using indirect standardization (in this case applying age and sex specific divorce rates) ratios are, once again, calculated of observed to expected number of divorces for given aggregates.

Prior to 1976 no detailed information on the number of divorces by country of birth of the husband and the wife was available. Divorces were only tabulated by two categories: Australian born, and foreign born. In 1976 with the introduction of the FLA detailed information on country of birth or husband and wife became available.

TABLE 6 in here

Results presented in Table 6 indicate that both men and women born in New Zealand have the highest rate of divorce followed by the United Kingdom and Ireland (taken as an aggregate) and then by Germany. Persons born in the Netherlands and in Australia are close to the national average. In the category 'Other Europe' in which the Italian and Greek born population are well represented the divorce rates are considerably below the national average.

It should be noted that the ratios for 1976 were

calculated using census data for married (now married plus separated) males and females. For 1981, however, the only census data available to date are for the currently married (excluding the permanently separated) females.

All the data presented to this point refer to Australia at the national level. Although limited, some information on the relative level of divorce in the six states and two territories may be obtained by comparing rates for divorces granted in 1976 under the FLA. The information on state of usual residence of the petitioner -- as against the state or territory in which the divorce was registered -- was tabulated only in 1976 through 1979 and discontinued thereafter. It is unfortunate that all the detailed data by state or territory remain tabulated only by the state or territory in which the divorce was registered. To the extent that couples register their divorces in a court outside their state of usual residence, the results tabulated by state of registration will be affected. For most states the differences between the number of divorces by state of registration and state of usual residence is negligible. The Australian Capital Territory, however, is greatly affected by this difference; to a lesser extent this is also true of New South Wales and the Northern Territory. Of the 1,331 divorces registered

TABLE 7 in here

in the ACT under the FLA only 57% were to ACT residents in 1976 while 39 per cent were to the residents of New South Wales thus giving the ACT an exceptionally high divorce rate when statistics by state of registration are used. This

can be clearly seen in Table 7 which presents crude divorce rates calculated by state of registration and by state of residence.

It is obvious that when comparing levels of divorce of one state or territory to another rates based on usual residence must be used. Although the divorce rate for the ACT remains high, the Northern Territory is shown to have the highest rate of divorce. The rates shown in Table 7 are, however, still affected by variation in the age structure of the married population among the states. This effect can be controlled for by indirect standardization the results of which are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8 in here

The ratios of observed to expected number of divorces confirm that the Northern Territory has the highest incidence of divorces and Western Australia the lowest. It is also worth noting that when the age structure is controlled for, the ACT has a level of marriage dissolutions not significantly different from the national average.

Religion is unquestionably an important factor in divorce. National divorce statistics do little to shed light on the relation between religion and divorce; however, some very tentative conclusions can be reached using, once again, indirect standardization.

Although discontinued under the FLA information on the denomination of the marriage ceremony was collected for divorces granted under the MCA. Ideally it should have been possible to analyse the 1971 and 1976 divorces by religion.

Unfortunately, due to missing data the analysis had to be confined to divorces granted in 1975 only. To obtain information on the population at risk the 1976 census had to be used.

TABLE 9 in here

Despite the limitations, some general patterns emerge in Table 9. Catholics, as would be expected, have lower ratios of observed to expected divorces as do Other Christian and Non-Christian groups. It would be unwise to draw further conclusions from this table due to problems inherent in the reporting of religion in the divorce as well as census statistics. Religion in the divorce statistics refers only to the denomination of the marriage ceremony. When the bride and the groom are of different religions, the denomination of the marriage ceremony will indicate the religion of only one partner. Census data on religion are also not without serious limitations. Answering the question on religion is optional, and many do not answer it. The population used to calculate the ratio for the divorces of marriages conducted by civil ceremony in Table 9 comprised those enumerated in the census as 'no religion', 'religion not classifiable' and 'religion not stated'. This group may correspond poorly to the persons marrying in a civil ceremony.

Given all these limitations Table 9 must be interpreted with extreme caution. Undoubtedly surveys dealing with life experiences including religious upbringing and attitudes would be more useful in exploring the relation between divorce and religion.

Conclusions

Period analysis is based on detailed data on the demographic and social characteristics of the population available for census years. It is only one way to approach the study of divorce. A more comprehensive approach would require it to be supplemented by cohort analysis which follows the experience of individual marriage cohorts.

Some issues are better studied using cohort approach because some characteristics are easier to obtain for marriages than for the census population. These include such characteristics of husband and wife relevant to differential risk of divorce as the relative ages of bride and groom, relative birthplaces, and previous marital status. Cohort analysis is also better suited to forecasting divorces which is difficult and tenuous task at best. The cohort approach, however, has to deal with the effects of migration, especially important in Australia, and of mortality; both of these take on increasing importance when studying marriages of long duration.

There are other aspects, equally important in the study of divorce, for which period analysis is better suited. Some of them have been presented in this paper. One of the major problems in period analysis is that characteristics reported in the registration of divorces do not always match well with those in the census (religion is the prime example). It should also be remembered that the information obtained from divorce statistics is drawn from legal documents while census data are provided voluntarily and non-responses are not infrequent.

Despite these shortcomings relating divorces to original marriage cohorts or to the married population is far preferable to relying on crude divorce rates or ratios of divorces to marriages in a given year, or to using central tendencies such as median age at divorce or median duration of marriage at divorce.

TABLE 1

Number of divorces and crude divorce rates, 1951-1981, Australia

Year	Number of divorces	Crude divorce rate (per 1,000 population)
1951-55 ^a	7 091	0.8
1956-60 ^a	6 720	0.7
1961-65 ^a	7 568	0.7
1966-70 ^a	10 681	0.9
1971	12 947	1.0
1972	15 655	1.2
1973	16 195	1.2
1974	17 633	1.3
1975	24 237	1.8
1976 Matrimonial Causes Act	15 720	
Family Law Act	47 510	
Total	63 230	4.5
1977	45 150	3.2
1978	40 608	2.8
1979	37 854	2.6
1980	39 258	2.7
1981	41 412	2.8
1982	44 088	2.9

TABLE 2

Age-specific divorce rates per 10,000 married population;
census years 1971, 1976, 1981, Australia

Age group	1971	1976			1971	1976		1981
		MCA	FLA			MCA	FLA	
		Males				Females		
under 25*	24	26	152	143	37	39	192	188
25-29	69	70	248	233	78	79	242	224
30-34	69	77	210	194	62	77	193	172
35-39	56	71	175	163	51	65	161	148
40-44	52	61	155	136	47	51	147	119
45-49	45	47	140	110	41	41	122	90
50-54	36	37	115	84	30	32	98	64
55-59	27	29	87	55	20	22	68	42
60-64	17	18	60	36	12	13	44	18
65+ .	7	8	27	17	5	7	22	
Total*	43	48	144	121	43	48	144	121

* excludes males under 18 and females under 16 years of age

MCA = Matrimonial Causes Act; FLA = Family Law Act

TABLE 3

Duration-specific divorce rates per 10,000 married women*:
 census years 1971, 1976, 1981. Australia

Duration of marriage (years)	1971	1976		1981
		MCA	FLA	
0-4	25	21	181	182
5-9	98	103	291	250
10-14	74	89	205	175
15-19	58	69	166	137
20-24	1	52	143	111
25-29	33	39	116	80
30+	1	16	46	26
All durations	49	48	146	127

* based on married women excluding separated

TABLE 4

Divorces by age of wife: census years 1971, 1976, 1981. Australia

Year	Age of wife at the time of divorce											Total *
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+	
Number of divorces												
1971	13	1 439	3 048	2 204	1 687	1 616	1 345	817	467	---	305	---
1976 MCA	24	1 454	3 794	3 221	2 331	1 603	1 345	983	531	257	171	15 720
FLA	215	7 034	11 580	8 058	5 777	4 622	3 988	3 004	1 672	879	565	47 510
1981	121	5 399	10 081	8 632	6 165	4 132	2 706	1 934	1 157	---	934	---
Duration standardized ratio ^o												
1971	12.5	129.8	120.6	92.5	91.0	98.4	101.4#	101.5#	91.3	--	44.9	--
1976 MCA	28.4	141.6	112.5	100.2#	95.8	92.3	95.5#	104.0#	92.8#	61.8	33.7	100.0
FLA	73.9	119.7	103.0	96.7	94.7	101.0#	100.9#	111.2	102.5#	74.3	39.2	100.0
1981	29.5	113.2	111.5	97.2	101.6	95.8	95.2	101.1#	91.1	--	46.5	--

*Total includes not stated age: there were 2 divorces in 1971, 6 (MCA) and 117 (FLA) in 1976 and 142 cases in 1981.

^oRatio = (observed number of divorces : expected number of divorces) * 100 ; expected number of divorces calculated by indirect standardisation using duration-specific divorce rates as standard (divorces of not stated age of wife were excluded from the calculations)

[#] the ratio statistically not significant at 5 per cent level

TABLE 5

Divorces by the number of children: census years 1971, 1976, 1981, Australia

Year	Number of children						Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5+	
Number of divorces							
1971	4 212	3 180	2 973	1 601	619	362	12 947
1976 MCA	4 365	3 644	4 148	2 202	872	489	15 720
FLA	19 241	11 107	10 274	4 559	1 670	659	47 510
1981	16 127	8 898	10 621	4 141	1 231	394	41 412
Duration standardized ratios ^a							
1971	256.9 (195.3)	176.7	77.6	59.4	45.0	33.3	100.0
1976 MCA	218.9 (177.3)	176.4	78.5	66.1	57.0	46.9	100.0
FLA	225.8 (191.4)	150.8	70.0	52.5	42.2	23.9	100.0
1981	245.0 (191.2)	139.7	79.8	52.1	37.2	19.3	100.0

^a see footnote in Table 4

values in () are based on the number of married women reporting no issue plus those whose issue was not stated.

TABLE 6

Divorces by country of birth of husband/wife: census years 1976* and 1981. Australia

Year	Australia	Great Britain & Ireland	New Zealand	Germany	Netherlands	Other Europe	All other countries	Not stated	Total
Number of divorces									
1976 Husband	33 786	6 207	571	866	663	3 190	1 533	694	47 510
Wife	35 975	5 533	496	799	532	2 187	1 311	677	47 510
1981 Wife	31 286	4 642	777	599	392	1 875	1 699	142	41 412
Age-standardized ratio [©]									
1976 Husband	101.2	120.5	150.1	132.8	106.0 #	59.2	79.6	-	100.0
Wife	102.9	120.5	134.6	128.0	104.0 #	47.4	70.5	-	100.0
1981 Wife	105.8	122.6	136.1	132.6	98.8 #	51.5	71.2	-	100.0

* Divorces under Family Law Act only

© standard: age-specific divorce rates, all Australia (not stated cases excluded from the calculation of rates)

not statistically significant at 5 per cent level

TABLE 7

Divorce rates by state of registration and state of usual residence: 1976, Family Law Act divorces

Divorce rate per 10,000 married couples	State or Territory							
	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
by state of registration	151	149	144	156	115	149	210	292
by state of usual residence	158	130*	140	151	115	147	225	171

* rate is affected by 1,546 divorces (12.1 per cent) registered in the state for which the state of usual residence was not stated

TABLE 8

Divorces by state of usual residence: 1976 (divorces under Family Law Act)

	State of usual residence										Total
	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Over-seas	Not stated	
Number of divorces	17 703	11 284	6 440	4 584	3 053	1 402	416	778	188	1 662	47 510
age-standardized ratios											
males	109.2	89.5	96.4	104.4	76.9	100.8 [#]	127.2	101.1 [#]	142.3	-	100.0
females	108.8	88.8	95.3	103.8	76.2	100.1 [#]	127.4	100.6 [#]	246.1	-	100.0

[#] not statistically significant at 5 per cent level

TABLE 9

Divorces by religion: Australia, 1975

Religion *	Number of divorces	Age standardized ratio †	
		Males	Females
Catholic	5 058	88.1	83.5
Churches of Christ	252	176.7	150.4
Church of England	7 713	118.1	113.0
Congregational	331	379.8	328.7
Presbyterian	2 600	169.2	159.2
Baptist	370	125.8	115.4
Methodist	2 734	163.3	149.7
Other Christian	1 004	44.8	43.4
Non-Christian	101	37.4	41.3
Civil ceremony ‡	4 083	71.3	86.2
Not stated	11	-	-
Total	24 257	100.0	100.0

* Denomination of marriage ceremony

† standard = age-specific divorce rates, all Australia, based on divorces 1975 and population married by age as of 1976 census

‡ standardized ratios calculated using population enumerated as 'No religion', 'Religion not classifiable', and 'Religion not stated'.

Changes in the demographic structure of Australian families: An analysis of census data

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INTRODUCTION¹

In the myriad of changes which have impinged upon Australian society during the postwar period few institutions have been so fundamentally reshaped as the family. Such statements are as commonplace in the Australian social science literature as they are in the popular media. Yet studies which specify not only the nature but also the extent of these changes are few and far between.² The formal demography of the family, defined by Boisaerts (1983, 27) as the branch of the subject "which deals with the quantitative aspects of the size, composition and change of families and households", remains underdeveloped in Australia. Clearly however there is a need for information regarding trends in the numbers and composition of families and households, their causes and implications. Such knowledge is of practical and policy significance but also constitutes essential background to an understanding of many social, demographic and economic changes occurring within contemporary Australian society. The aim of this paper is to make a contribution in this area by reviewing some of the major demographic changes which have occurred in the size, structure and characteristics of Australian households during the 1970's. It is clear that one of the major contributing factors to the neglect of the formal demography of the Australian family have been limitations in the basic data sources which have been available. These limitations derive mainly from a lack of conceptual clarity within the subject which as Boisaerts (1983, 27) suggests is characterized by the "complexity of the subject matter and the lack of standard definitions, procedures and models for the analysis of family and household data". However, recently released results of the 1981 census allows the extent and nature of some of these changes to be established with some degree of precision.

The paper begins with a brief discussion of the nature and limitations of the census data which constitutes the main source for the analysis of changes in families and households which forms the bulk of the paper. This is followed by a review of recent changes in the size of Australian families and some of the causes of these changes. We then move to an examination of the composition of households by firstly discussing changing patterns of household "headship", then by analysing changing distribution of family structure types and putting forward some explanations

for these changes and discussing their social and economic implications. Next some of the demographic characteristics of these family and household types are described. We focus particularly upon the age structure of families and households, their income, the type of housing they occupy and the policy implications which are associated with variations in those characteristics. Finally we briefly address a frequently overlooked but important and policy relevant feature of changing Australian families, namely the tendency for particular types of families to be spatially concentrated in particular types of areas.

DATA SOURCES AND DEFINITIONS

Although the family is a basic and universal unit of social organization there is considerable debate concerning the definition of what types of groupings of individuals can be classified as a family and how this differs from the concept of household. This debate however, is somewhat academic in the context of this paper since predominantly secondary data sources are employed here and these specific definitions are imposed externally. The main source used is the 1981 Australian Census of Population and Housing. At the time of writing the family/household data available from the census was that in the unexpanded and expanded summary tables for a range of geographical areas and a series of cross classified tables available on microfiche (ABS, 1983a). In addition we had access to public use unit record sample tapes of one per cent of all Australian households and individuals. Although this sample represents only a small part of the Australian population, it is larger than any available sample surveys, contains nearly all the data on individuals gathered at the census and as Siegel and Taeuber (1982, 148) point out, it "permits do-it-yourself statistical analyses to answer questions that a particular service provider or academic researcher needs answered."

The concepts of family and household used in the 1981 census were as follows:

1. A household consists of a person or persons who consider themselves to form a separate household or who have common eating arrangements. Boarders who receive accommodation and meals with other persons in the household are treated as part of that household. Lodgers who are provided with accommodation only are treated as separate households.
2. The concept of family was more complex. Family structure was imputed during processing from replies to questions

concerning the relationship of each person in the household to Person No. 1 in that household. The rules for coding of family relationships were quite complex and dealt with in detail in an ABS publication (ABS, 1983b, 12-19). However, individuals in the household who were not related by blood or marriage to Person 1 in the household were not considered family members but were classified as non-family individuals. Two types of families were recognized in any single household - a primary family unit (PFL) whose head is also head of the household and up to three secondary family units (SPU's).

Our concern in this paper is with that section of the population who reside in private dwellings. The census definition of an occupied private dwelling is "the premises occupied by a household on census night" (ABS, 1983b, 2). Persons living in hotels, gaols, religious and charitable institutions, defence establishments, other communal dwellings and caravan parks are considered as being in non-private dwellings for census purposes. Such persons are not deemed to be members of a household or a family and they do not appear in the household and family statistics. This is usually overlooked in studies of census family and household data yet in 1981 some 638,309 persons (4.4 per cent of the total) were counted in 22,516 non-private dwellings. The information coded for occupants in non-private dwellings on the night of the census did not include family relationship.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF HOUSEHOLD FORMATION AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE

FIGURE 1 in here

In Australia, as Figure 1 shows, rates of household formation have usually outpaced rates of population growth over the last half century. Between 1966 and 1976 the rate of household formation was twice that of population growth but during the last intercensal period (1976-81) the number of households increased at 2.5 per cent per annum compared to 1.5 per cent growth in population. This differential was somewhat smaller than that obtaining in the United States during the 1970's (Norton and Glick, 1979, 19). Figure 1 shows that while population growth has slowed dramatically during the 1970's the growth rate in the number of new households has remained at a high level.

Associated with this pattern is a shrinking in the size of Australian families. This is apparent in Figure 2 which shows the average number of

FIGURE 2 in here

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persons per occupied dwelling in Australia at each census since federation. The consistent trend of a decrease in the size of households evident for a century has accelerated in recent years. Over the fifteen years since the 1966 census the average size of the Australian household declined by 12 per cent from 3.53 to 3.1 persons. During the 1976-81 period alone there was a 6 per cent decline from 3.3 to 3.1. The average number of persons per occupied dwelling however was still higher than in the United States where the 1980 census results indicated that the average household size declined from 3.11 to 2.75 during the 1970's (Russell, 1981, 28).

The reduction in family size is also evident when we examine the distribution of household sizes in Table 1. It can be seen that the most commonly occurring household size is of two persons, while by far the fastest growing category is that of single person households. One and two person households now account for 47.1 per cent of all Australian households

TABLE 1 in here

compared to only 28.4 per cent in 1947. In 1947 29.4 per cent of households had more than 4 members compared to only 16.9 per cent in 1981. During the late 1970's in the United States it was found that "For the first time in our history, more than half of all households consist of only one or two persons - 51 per cent as of 1978 to be precise" (Norton and Glick, 1979, 19). Table 1 shows that there is almost an inverse relationship between size of household and the rate of growth of that size category of households. The number of Australian households with more than five persons in them actually declined between the 1976 and 1981 censuses.

The reasons for the decline in family size are fairly clear and can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. Fertility decline which in the last two decades has seen a halving of the average number of children born to women (Wood and Hugo, 1983a, 5) has resulted in a reduction in the number of very large households. However, it is not a factor of significance in the increase in the number of one person households and in many cases, two person households. As Russell (1981, 28) has pointed out in the United States context ...

"Since 1940 the shrinking of the American household has been due mainly to the rise in the numbers of people living alone, rather than declining fertility."

2. Improved expectation of life, improved pensions and superannuation as well as changing community attitudes have increased the time that couples and widowed persons can maintain themselves or an individual family - prolonging the "empty nest" stage of the life cycle (Brown, 1981, 13).
3. Increased divorce which usually splits a family into two separate households.
4. Age structure effects (Hugo, 1979).
5. Increased tendency for young people to leave the parental home at a younger age and establish separate households (Hugo, 1979, 12).

CHANGING PATTERNS OF HOUSEHOLD HEADSHIP

The number of households has hence grown at a considerably faster rate than the overall population is increasing. In this section we shall examine in a little more detail the causes of this rapid growth in the number of households. To do this we need to disaggregate the components of change; those elements adding to the stock of households and those subtracting from it. The former includes new households migrating in from elsewhere but also the splitting of existing households either through the divorce or separation of cohabiting couples or by adolescent and young adult children leaving the parental home and establishing new, separate households. On the other hand, the number of households will be reduced to the extent that members of those households die or that they combine with another household (e.g., an aged woman moving in with the family of one of her children). During the 1970's we have seen an acceleration of the splitting processes but a slowdown in the combining processes, especially because older people are maintaining themselves in separate housing for a longer period than was the case previously.

It is self evident that the probability of individuals forming new households varies considerably with the life cycle stage that they are in. At each such stage the numbers of households will depend firstly upon the number of persons in that age category - i.e., the number of people at risk of establishing a separate household. On the other hand, it will also depend upon the headship rate among people of that age - i.e. the probability that a person of that age will form a separate household. Growth can occur

either through people entering that age group outnumbering those leaving it, or through an increase in the propensity of people of that age to form a separate household. The concept of headship rates is an important one and it refers to the ratio of household heads to the total population within a particular age group. The concept of a head of household was employed in Australian censuses up until the 1976 census and this historically tended to mean that the husband was considered the head of the household which he and his wife maintain jointly. To eliminate this implicit sexism in 1981 the ABS abandoned this concept and replaced it with that of "person one", i.e. the person in respect of whom the first column of the census schedule was completed. However, the ABS suggests that this "change in terminology on the census schedule from 'household head' to 'person one' appears to have had no effect on the resulting statistics" (ABS, 1983b, 10).

To a large degree the rate of new household formation is going to depend upon the rate at which the adult population is being expanded. The major source of such expansion of course is in the younger adult ages either through young Australians leaving their parental homes to set up a new household or through net gains of immigrants (who also are disproportionately concentrated in the young adult ages). This can be readily seen in Figure 3 which shows a very steep increase in male headship in the young adult ages and stabilizing at a very high level for males after the mid 30's. For females there is a steep increase in headship in the late teenage ages, steadying around 20 per cent in the middle adult years, then a steady increase after age 60 as a greater proportion of women are widowed.

FIGURE 3 in here

It is also evident in Figure 3 that headship rates for males and females of all ages have increased significantly over the last two decades. It will be noted that there is a significant difference between that for males and females between the 1976 and 1981 censuses with a general reduction in "headship" rates for males and substantial increases for females, especially in the young adult ages. This pattern is clearly a reflection of the shift in societal attitudes concerning family headship and the changed concept adopted by ABS for the 1981 census, leading to a greater incidence than in earlier years of women being reported as head of the family

where both husband and wife are present. The important point in this context is that total levels of headship (for both sexes combined) have continued to increase for all ages between 1976 and 1981.

In Figure 4 the age-sex distribution for Australia in 1981 is superimposed over that for 1961. It can be seen that in the intervening period the bulge at the bottom of the 1961 age pyramid which was caused by the "post World War II baby boom" has moved into the young adult ages. This of course has been a major factor in the high rates of new household formation. This is exacerbated by the fact that this bulge follows the cohorts born in the 1930's and early 1940's when low fertility and low levels of immigration during the Depression and war years meant that there were deficits in these cohorts compared to those of people born before them (in the 1910's and 1920's) and after them (the baby boom generation). It will also be noted in Figure 4 that there is a somewhat smaller bulge in the age structure for people born in the 1910's and 1920's - representing the high fertility of those years but also the large number of immigrants born overseas in those years, but who during the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's migrated to Australia as young adults. This is the group who are moving into the retirement ages during the 1980's causing a rapid growth of the aged population which is currently the fastest growing group in the population.

FIGURE 4 in here

The ageing of the postwar baby boom generation into the young adult ages gave the major impetus to household formation outpacing population growth. Figure 5 shows that households with heads aged less than 25 increased at around 10 per cent per annum during the 1960's or more than three times the rate at which all households increased and five times the rate of population growth. The pattern is also evident in the changing rates of growth of the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups in Figure 5, although the growth was during the 1970's when the baby boom group reached those ages. However, the undercutting at the base of the 1981 age pyramid (Figure 4) means that toward the end of the 1980's there will be a major reduction in the numbers of people entering the prime new household formation ages. This is reflected in the projected rates of increase in household formation shown in Figure 5. Another striking feature of Figure 5 is the increasing growth in household headship among the population aged 65 years and over.

FIGURE 5 in here

The number of people in particular age categories is not the only demographic factor influencing the extent of household formation. There are several other forces which are causing increases in the headship rates within particular age groups. Table 2 shows that even during the 1976-1981 intercensal period there were increases in the proportions of people who were heads of households in all major adult age groups. In the youngest age category there was a continuation of the trend toward higher headship rates which was evident in the earlier postwar intercensal periods. Throughout the postwar period there have been increases in the tendency for children to leave their parents' home at a younger age than they have in the past. This was not only a result of the major postwar decline

Table 2 in here

in average age at first marriage and the almost universal ability of young marrieds to establish a separate household immediately after marriage, unlike many of their parents, but also for the growing trend for young men and women to establish households in what Morrison (1977b, 204) calls 'non-family living situations'. This created a considerable upswing in demand for housing - for flats and apartments as well as detached houses. It is extremely difficult to predict whether or not these trends for higher headship rates among young adults will continue or change. It may be that such contemporary developments as very high rates of unemployment among the younger sections of the workforce and the growing popularity of commune-type living arrangements will result in a reduction in the rate of creation of new separate households among the young adult age groups. There is also some evidence in the United States that there is a growing tendency for unmarried young adults to return to the parental home after spending a period of time in a separate household because of increased unemployment and costs of housing (Cary, 1980, 90). The projections of headship rates made by the National Population Inquiry (Di Iulio, 1976, 15) assume an increase in the headship rates will occur over the projection period (1976-2001) among the 15-19 age group.

Another demographic element shaping the rate of household formation and hence housing demand is the rising incidence of divorce. The proportion of household heads made up of permanently separated and divorced persons rose from less than 1% in 1947 to 5% in 1971 and after the liberalisation of grounds for divorce by the 1975 Family Law Act this further increased this proportion to 11% in 1981. Morrison (1977b, 208) has recognised similar trends in the United States:

"The rising incidence of single-parent families, two or more unrelated people living together, and people of all ages living alone suggests the extent to which lifestyle options have been widened by affluence and the relaxation of social norms. Living arrangements have changed most dramatically in the under 35 age bracket, and the fact that baby-boom cohorts are contained within it only compounds the intensity of impact."

A further demographic trend of significance which must be considered in any discussion of changing patterns of household formation is the ageing of the Australian population with the number of persons aged 65 years and over increasing to 1,145,234 in 1981 and the percentage which they comprise of the total population rising from 8.3 in 1976 to 9.8 to 1981. The tendency for people to maintain separate living quarters not only after their children have formed households of their own but also after attaining retirement age and following widowhood has been and probably will remain a significant element in maintaining high household headship rates among the older segment of the population. The essential point here then is that separate households are 'surviving' longer than in the past and hence requiring separate housing units for a longer period.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

Household composition and family structure have undergone fundamental demographic and sociological changes in Australia during the postwar period. As Morrison (1977b, 207) points out in a similar context in the United States the sociological underpinnings of these changes are not fully understood but the demographic influences are fairly readily identified. Table 3 shows that since the 1966 census significant shifts have taken place in the relative importance of different types of family structures.

TABLE 3 in here

It is apparent that the conventional stereotype of the typical Australian family being a wife, husband and dependent children is one which needs some revision since it accounted for 30.7 per cent of families in 1966 and by 1981 this proportion had been reduced to 26.6 per cent. This remained the most common of the family types but it will be noted that the gap between this "typical" composition and single person households in 1981 was only one third its size in 1966. It will be shown later that a substantial number of the "Other Adults" in the categories of family type given in Table 3

are in fact children of the Head and Spouse of that family who have reached adult age. Hence if we add categories 4, 7 and 8 in Table 3 together all families with Head, Spouse and children (whether dependent or not) will be involved except for those not residing in private households (e.g. those in caravans on census night). Obviously since the "other adults" category also includes (besides adult children of the head and spouse) other adult relatives of the head of the family (e.g. elderly parents or parents-in-law), this figure will exaggerate the actual number of families comprising only the head, spouse and their children. In 1966 these three categories together accounted for 53.1 per cent of all families but by 1981 there had been a major decline to 43.6 per cent.

Over the 15 years covered in Table 3 the number of people residing alone more than doubled while the total population only increased by some 28.6 per cent. This has been a pattern characteristic of most developed countries. In Canada for example, between 1951 and 1976 the number of people living alone increased from one quarter of a million to 1.2 million while the total population increased by only 64 per cent (Harrison, 1981, 9). It will be noted that during the 1976-81 intercensal period the single person family surpassed families consisting only of a spouse and head as the second most numerous family type in Australia. The husband and wife-only family increased its share of all families between 1966 and 1976 but only retained its share over the most recent intercensal period.

The fastest growing family type over the 1966-81 period was the single parent family, i.e. head and dependents only in the census categories in Table 3. This applied especially to the 1976-81 intercensal period when the number increased by more than 90,000 and their proportion of all families rose from 3.8 to 5.2 per cent. In considering single parent families we should also look at category 6 in Table 3 (Head, other adults and dependents) because as was mentioned earlier many of the "other adults" in this category are in fact grown up children of the head. Hence if one includes both categories 2 and 6 as single parent families they make up 6.6 per cent of all families. This figure may be slightly exaggerated by the fact that some male householders may have been temporarily absent on the night of the census. On the other hand, category 5 in Table 3 (Head and other adults) can also be regarded as including some single parent families although the children are of adult age. In any case it is clear that there are now more than a quarter of a million single parent families in Australia. Again there are comparable trends evident in other developed world countries. In the

United States one parent families numbered some 6.6 million in 1981 compared to only 3.3 million in 1970 (U.S. Bureau of Census 1982a, 1). The U.S. Bureau of Census also reported that one fifth of all children aged under 18 years lived in one parent families in 1981 compared to 12 per cent in 1970 (U.S. Bureau of Census 1982b, 1). Bane and Weisz (1980, 11) estimate that more than a third of the couples who married for the first time in the 1970's will become divorced and more than a third of the children born in the 1970's will spend part of their childhood living with only one parent. Norton and Glick (1979, 20) estimated that 45 per cent of all children born in 1978 in the U.S. will become members of one parent families before they reach 18 years of age if contemporary patterns are maintained until the end of the century.

All other family types declined in their relative share of all families over the 15 years preceding the 1981 census. In fact the significance of families made up of head, spouse, other adults and dependents decreased to such an extent that the number of such families actually was less in 1981 than in 1966. It should be noted in Table 3 however, that much of this absolute decline was recorded in the 1976-1981 intercensal period, thus suggesting that a significant change has taken place in recent years. This type of family is of particular importance and interest since it includes many of those households where a parent (or parents) of the household head or spouse are living with them. If the decline in this category is indicative of a reduction in the propensity of householders to take in aged parents it is a matter of considerable policy interest and concern given the substantial increase in the Australian aged population which is going to occur during the next decade. As noted earlier, the "other adults" category also includes adult children of the head and spouse of the family. Hence the decline in the significance of this category may also be a reflection of the increased propensity for young adults to leave the parental home at a younger age than in the past and to set up separate households of their own. The decline in the number of families made up of head, spouse and other adults between 1976 and 1981 may also be indicative of a reduction in the tendency for householders to take in aged parents or parents-in-law into their homes and for young adults to leave the parental home.

We should also note some differences between males and females in the hierarchy of the various family types considered above. Table 4

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shows the number and proportions of Australian household heads who were males and females in 1976 and 1981. It will be noticed that there was a large increase in the proportion of households headed by women between 1976 and 1981. Again this is a tendency which is occurring in other parts of the developed world. For example in the United States the highest rate of growth for any family type during the 1970's was for families maintained by women with no husband present. Between 1970 and 1979 there was a 51 per cent increase in families maintained by women while those maintained by married couples increased by only 7 per cent (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980). The causes of these trends in Australia are probably similar to those given by the U.S. Bureau of Census for the large growth in the number of families maintained by women. These were as follows:

1. An increase in childbearing outside marriage.
2. The dissolution of families through separation, divorce and widowhood.
3. Contemporary women's inclination and ability to establish and maintain independent families rather than live with parents and other relatives.
4. The disproportionately large segment of the young adult population.

In Australia between 1976 and 1981 there was a 38.6 per cent increase in the number of families headed by females compared to a 6.9 per cent increase in the number headed by males, and the ratio of male to female heads declined from 4 to 3. It is clear from Table 5 however that this change was not evenly distributed across all types of families. In fact among single person families which accounts for more than a half of all female family heads the intercensal increase was not as great as it was for males. The number of males living alone increased by 39.2 per cent between the censuses compared to 27.5 per cent for women living alone, although there were still nearly 5 women living alone for every 4 men in that living situation. This may be a function of increased divorce rates resulting in more men living alone and perhaps more young men leaving home and setting up independent single person households.

One of the most interesting trends evident in Table 4, is the dominance of single parent families by females heads. It was mentioned earlier that there was a very rapid increase in the number of single parent families between 1976 and 1981, but Table 4 shows that the increase has been greater among those families with female heads. In 1981 there were 217,170 female single parent families compared to 34,887 male single parent families. In the United States in 1981 some 90 per cent of one parent families were maintained by women (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1982a). It should also be noted in Table 4 that there were 52,491 families comprising a female head, other adults and children which also should be classified as single parent families. Such families only grew at a slightly faster rate than the population (9.7 per cent) although families of this type headed by males decreased by 6.9 per cent over the 1976-81 intercensal period.

It is interesting to compare patterns in the United States and Australia with respect to the proportions of primary family units being maintained by married couples, single males and single females. This is attempted in Table 5 which also utilizes the United States Bureau of Census concept of "family" and "non-family" (i.e. households comprising one person or two or more related persons). It can be seen that the split between family and non-family

TABLE 5 in here

households is similar in both nations but there are some significant differences in the distribution between different types of family households. In the U.S. the proportions of such households maintained by single parents is double that in Australia. Hence it may well be that single parent families in Australian cities will continue to increase rapidly. This has important implications for planners since such families constitute intensive users of welfare services and have very large proportions with below poverty levels of income (Hugo, 1983a).

Anticipating future changes in family composition is even more problematical than projecting future household formation rates. However, there is little or no evidence to suggest that the trends of change in the structure of Australian households during the 1970's which have been identified here, will be drastically redirected during the rest of the 1980's. In the United States context Reynolds *et al.* (1980, 15) have made the following prediction for households through to the end of the decade ...

"... even quite conservative projections show the number of individuals living alone increasing and the average household size declining through the end of the decade. Non-family households and single parent households are likely to grow more rapidly than husband-wife households." Such a prognosis would appear to apply equally to the Australian situation.

The major changes in the composition of families and in living arrangements briefly outlined above are the product of wider demographic, social and economic forces. It is with an examination of some of these forces, insofar as they can be discerned from census data that this paper is particularly concerned. Accordingly we will now turn to a brief analysis of recent trends in marriage and divorce since these obviously have a basic influence upon changes in family formation and dissolution as well as upon the changing structure and composition of the family.

CHANGING MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE PATTERNS

The National Population Inquiry (1975) devoted a considerable amount of attention to the analysis of postwar Australian marriage patterns drawing especially on the seminal work of McDonald (1974). McDonald recognized two major eras in the demography of marriage in Australia. Before 1900 there was a conservative pattern of marriage and both age at marriage and proportions marrying were similar to those prevailing in England at that time. However after 1900 there was a movement away from this pattern whereby both "men and women married at younger ages and a much lower proportion remained unmarried" (McDonald, 1980, 8). Figure 6 for example shows the consistent decline in the proportion of men and women aged 45-49

FIGURE 6 in here

who had never married over the years since the 1921 census. Figure 6 also gives some indications of changing patterns in age at marriage via the proportions of persons aged 20-24 who were unmarried at each census since 1921. After the increase in age at marriage during the depression of the 1930's McDonald (1980, 9) points out that there were two major periods of downward movement in the age at marriage and these are clearly evident in the middle two graphs in Figure 6. These were during the Second World War and in the latter half of the 1960's. McDonald (1980, 9) concludes that from the 1930's onward (or at least until the early 1970's), the conservatism

that had surrounded marriage from initial white settlement was dissipated and Australians displayed much greater readiness to marry.

If we turn to the 1970's however it is apparent that some significant changes have been wrought. Figure 6 gives the first clues here in the marked increase in the proportions of both males and females aged 20-24 years remaining unmarried, between the 1971 and 1981 censuses. Whereas in 1971 36 per cent of females and 64 per cent of males aged 20-24 years had never been married this had increased to 54 per cent and 77 per cent respectively by 1981. This clearly indicates that in the 1970's Australians have begun to marry at much later ages. Moreover as McDonald (1980, 15) points out "present trends indicate that the increase in age at marriage is continuing at a rapid pace with little sign of abatement". Figure 7

FIGURE 7 is here

shows the proportion of women in each age group who were never married at the last three censuses. The major shift upward in the 1970's among the proportions of women aged between 20 and 35 who were unmarried is clearly evident. It is also interesting to note a reverse pattern among women aged 55 years and over. This of course reflects the high marriage rates among young women in the 1940's and 1950's who are entering the older age categories during the 1970's. However it should be noted that there are still quite large numbers of women and to a lesser extent men in the 70+ age category who have never been married. Indeed among women there is a regular pattern of increase in the proportion who have never married with increasing age after the 45-54 age group from 4.1 per cent in that category to 9.1 per cent of those aged over 70. The latter is significant from a policy viewpoint. It means that nearly a tenth of older women and 7.6 per cent of men aged over 70 do not have daughters and sons whom they can call upon to help them. Also it can of course be indicative of loneliness among this group with such a proportion not having any children or grandchildren to interact with. This pattern of a high proportion of the 70+ age group never having married has existed for all of the 1970's with the proportion in 1971 being 10.5 per cent for women and 8.2 per cent for men and in 1976 11.2 and 8.8 per cent respectively. As the younger cohorts move into this oldest age category the proportions never married will be decreased.

In examining the proportion married it is as well to bear in mind that at the censuses of 1976 and 1981 no distinction was made between *de facto* and legal marriages. Hence it would seem that most people in a form of consensual union would have been reported as "now married". We have very little information on the extent of incidence of various forms of consensual unions. However the survey of families undertaken by the ABS in 1982 (ABS, 1982) does give some indication of the incidence of "*de facto*" and "living together as married" unions. The survey asked respondents to indicate whether their marriage relationship was in either *de facto*/living together as married or one of legal marriage. However the ABS (1982, 2) feel that the former category was somewhat under-reported since they point out "It should be noted that some respondents may have chosen not to reveal that they were 'living with someone as married' and therefore the number of couples 'living together as married' may have been understated". Nevertheless the data do give some significant indications of consensual unions. Figure 8 shows the incidence of such unions according to the age of the

FIGURE 8 in here

female partner. The survey shows a significant incidence at all ages between 15 and 54 although the proportion of *de facto* marriages falls off steadily with age. Half of unions involving women under 20 are such unions while 17 per cent of those of women 20-24 and 7 per cent for women aged 25-29 were reported as "living together as married". Among the *de facto* married women 64.4 per cent had no children present and 16.2 per cent had one child present.

McDonald (1980 17) in his discussion of changes in age at marriage points out that there has been a broadening of the age at marriage distribution, indicating that attitudes toward marriage are not uniform throughout society. He quotes the results of semi-structured interviews conducted in three Australian cities (Caldwell et al, 1976, pp. 33, 36, 49, 59 and 70) which indicate some class differences in attitudes toward consensual unions and delaying age at marriage. McDonald (1980, 17) concludes that "While Australians in the 1970's have moved rapidly to delay marriage, it seems that most ultimately will marry". He makes the important point that the current move toward later age at marriage is a return to the earlier conservatism, despite it being

frequently seen as a liberal change in behaviour patterns. He argues that it represents a change in the pattern of decision making regarding marriage whereby couples are delaying marriage until the "economically" and psychologically proper time. This is greatly facilitated by modern contraceptive methods. He suggests that the significance of marriage as a life cycle event has declined and that the birth of the first child has assumed greater significance " ... The distinction between two young couples, one legally married without children, the other living together in a de facto union has become small. Marriage takes place, therefore, when a couple feel they have reached the economically proper time to have children or, if they plan to delay their first child after marriage when they feel that they have reached the psychologically proper time to marry."

Contemporaneous with the downturn in marriage has been a rapid increase in the divorce rate. In 1961 there were 2.0 divorces per 1,000 married women but this increased to 4.3 in 1971 and 12.7 in 1981. The highest rate yet achieved was 19.2 in 1976 following the promulgation of the Family Law Act. Moreover there has been a substantial increase in the proportion of women whose first marriage ends in divorce. This is apparent in Figure 9 which shows the proportion of women in five year age

FIGURE 9 in here

groups who were divorced or separated from their husbands at the time of the 1971, 1976 and 1981 census. It is clear that there have been major increases in the incidence of divorce in the thirties and to a lesser extent the forties. In fact at the time of the 1981 census a tenth of all women aged 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 were divorced or separated (9.5, 10.4 and 9.1 per cent respectively). McDonald (1980, 31) found that in the 1960's the extent of remarriage following divorce in Australia was surprisingly high with virtually all divorced persons remarrying within 6 years. However we know little about the extent of remarriage among the larger numbers of people who have been divorced in recent years. However in 1982 some 30 per cent of Australia's 117,275 marriages involved at least one divorced person and in 10 per cent of cases both participants were previously divorced. More than a half of all marriages of women aged over 30 were of previously divorced women. At the 1981 census the

proportions of all women aged in their twenties who had been married more than once was 2 per cent while this was the case with 6.1 per cent of women in their 30's, 6.7 per cent of those in their 40's and 7.4 per cent of those in their 50's. The proportion of women who have been divorced or separated by their early 30's is over 12 per cent. This is still substantially lower than in the United States where it was estimated during the 1970's that between 25 and 29 per cent of women in their late 20's will end their first marriage in divorce some time during their lifetime (Brown, 1981, 11) while the equivalent proportion in Australia is about a fifth (Day, 1979, 31). Hence McDonald (1980, 29) suggests that rates of divorce will continue to rise in Australia for some time yet. This pattern is seen in some quarters as a sign of social malaise and a symptom of breakdown of the Australian family. In such quarters the 1975 Family Law Act, which provides only one ground (irretrievable breakdown) for dissolution of marriage, is seen as encouraging people to look on marriage as a temporary arrangement to be withdrawn from at the slightest provocation" (Day, 1979, 26). Most commentators however see it as an appropriate and reasonable method of resolving poor marriages.

MULTIPLE FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

One element in the increasing complexity of living arrangements among Australians has been an increase in the number of multiple family households. At the census the rules for coding of family relationships recognized two types of families in any single household - a primary family unit (PFU) whose head is also head of the household and up to three secondary family units (SFU's). The PFU may consist of

- (a) head of household
- (b) spouse
- (c) unmarried children of any age
- (d) any child under age 16
- (e) lone parents and other older generation relatives of direct line relationship to household head or spouse who are aged over 30, not presently married and without parents, spouse or children present.
- (f) sister (in law) or brother (in law) of the household head aged 16 or over, not currently married and without parents spouse or children present.

An SFU must consist of at least 2 persons which could be

- (a) a married couple
- (b) a married couple with their children
- (c) a lone parent with children.

Other members of households are considered "non-family members" and are considered in the next section. Hence households shared by two or more unrelated adults are not considered as comprising separate families.

Table 6 shows that although the overwhelming majority of households are made up of only one family, over five per cent of Australians living in families as defined by the census do so in households

TABLE 6 in here

comprising more than one family. However the number of multiple-family households grew faster than single family households over the 1976-81 intercensal period. This is of course not the first time that there has been an increase in multiple family households in the postwar period since in the early postwar period the shortage in housing supply was so acute that many young married couples lived with someone else, usually their parents.

NON-FAMILY MEMBERS OF HOUSEHOLDS

The ways in which individuals in Australia are grouping themselves into living arrangement units have become increasingly more complex during the postwar period and there is a constant state of change in these patterns. However it is difficult to chart the detailed demography of these patterns because data collection, coding and publication procedures and concepts have not always been able to cope with these rapid and far-reaching changes. Moreover reformulating basic concepts to keep statistics responsive to these changes greatly limits the amount of comparable time series data relating to families which are available. A range of alternative

living arrangements to the family are now found in our society, although it is difficult to detect many of them in the available statistics. A basic distinction made in the 1981 census within households is between family and non-family members of those households. It is the data relating to these non-family household members, which can give some indications relating to alternative living arrangements. The various categories of persons regarded at the census as being family individuals, were detailed in the previous section. Non-family members of private households include the following (ABS, 1983a, 15)

- (a) related non-family members (relatives belonging to a family unit outside the household)
- (b) boarders
- (c) other non-family members (e.g. friends, guests, foster children, employees).

At the 1981 census there were some 432,816 non-family members of private households. It is clear that many of these are cohabiting in households with persons who were classified as single person families at the census. This can be inferred from the fact that whereas the census identified 1,113,136 family units consisting of only one person only 839,301 households were reported as having only one person. It would appear that this pattern has been established through most of the 1970's since at the 1976 census 842,405 family units consisting of one person were identified but only 649,646 households were counted as having one person. Hence the ratio of single person families to single person households increased only slightly from 1.30 to 1.33.

The 1981 census one per cent sample data do provide us with some information regarding the non-family members of private households. The sample of individuals identified some 486,600 persons as non-family members of households. Of these 57,700 were related in some way to the household head and 52,500 were boarders. We will concentrate here on the remaining 376,400 (or 2.6 per cent of the total population) who were not relatives of the household head or boarders. Table 7 shows the distribution of sizes of households in which there were non-family individuals compared

Table 7 is here

to those for family individuals and persons living in non-private dwellings. This shows a clear concentration of non-family individuals in two person households with 42 per cent of non-family people being in such households compared to only 19 per cent of family individuals. The table shows that two thirds of cohabiting unrelated persons are in two or three person households compared to around a third of family individuals. Table 7 also indicates that whereas 2.6 per cent of the total population were classified as not being related to the head of the household in which they were living at the time of the census, this applied to 6 per cent of people in 2-person households and 4 per cent of persons in 3-person households.³

A quarter of the Australian population live in dwellings with four inmates and two thirds live in houses with four or less persons. Table 7 includes data on persons residing in non-private dwellings on the night of the census. They made up 4.5 per cent of the population and nearly two thirds were in dwellings with more than 60 residents and 84 per cent were in dwellings with 20 or more inmates. This reflects the predominance of institutional populations in this group. Prominent among this group are those in aged care institutions. Table 8 shows that nearly a quarter

Table 8 in here

of the non-private dwelling population were aged over 65. On the other hand, 77 per cent of the "non-family" individuals were aged between 15 and 34. Clearly then the population living in situations in which they are not related to the household head are overwhelmingly young adults living in pairs or groups of three. Indeed 5 per cent of all Australians aged 15-19, 10 per cent of those aged 20-24 and 4 per cent of those aged 25 to 34 years were classified in this way at the 1981 census.⁴ In addition, the percentages of these groups in institutions, caravan parks etc. (i.e. in non-private dwellings) were also relatively high - 5%, 6% and 4% respectively. However, the highest proportions of Australians enumerated in non-private dwellings was of course among the older age groups with 6 per cent of those aged 65-74 and 19 per cent of the 75+ group living in this category of dwellings, predominantly various types of aged care institutions.

Some further information regarding non-family individuals can

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be discerned from the 1982 ABS Survey of Australian families (ABS, 1982) which recognized a special category of "non family individuals" defined as "persons living alone or who are not related to any other member of the household." This survey identified some 1,495,500 persons (10.2 per cent of all Australians) as non-family individuals. Table 9 shows that the majority of these were persons living alone - numbering 1,009,200 persons (58.9 per cent of them females) and a further 74,500 were living with other family members (e.g. brothers or sisters in law). Hence 411,800 persons were living with other non-family individuals. Table 9 shows that 55.3 per cent of these were males whereas only 41.1 per cent of persons living alone were males. Young adults dominated among persons living with people who they are not related to - 78 per cent of males and 77 per cent of females are under the age of 35. On the other hand among

TABLE 9 in here

people living alone, older persons dominate with 63 per cent of women and 32 per cent of males living alone being aged over 60. Unfortunately we do not have comparable census data for 1976 and 1981 to establish the amount of increase in the number of unrelated people living together but it is clear that this has become a pattern of living arrangements of considerable importance especially among the young. This of course is also occurring in other Euro-American societies. In 1982 in the United States there were 1.9 million households shared by two unrelated adults of the opposite sex and 81 per cent of these included a partner under the age of 35 (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1983). There is a need for us to refine and improve Australian census definition concepts and coding procedures so that these important changes in living arrangements in Australian society can be clearly identified, charted and analysed.

AGE CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILY MEMBERS

It has been shown that the 1970's saw a major change in the distribution of family types in Australia. However, if policy makers and planners are to take account of these changes it is necessary to examine some of the key demographic social and economic characteristics of the members of those households. Accordingly this section and those that follow will examine the age, income and housing characteristics of the major types of families. Firstly we shall consider age structure which

is, of course, a vitally important determinant of many services required by those families. Here in some cases we will be employing data from the one per cent sample of individuals from the 1981 census and it should be borne in mind that where the numbers of individuals is small the probability of sampling error is increased.

Before examining the age structure of families we should note the age characteristics of the 1,135,701 Australians at the 1981 Census (7.8 per cent of the total population) who were not considered to be family members by the definition adopted at the Census. It has been shown above (Table 8) that the age structure of non-family individuals living in private households, who make up some 44 per cent of persons not included in families, is dominated by young adults aged 15 to 34 who make up 77 per cent of that population. Figure 10 shows the age structure of the 638,309 (4.4 per cent) of Australians

Figure 10 in here

living in non-private dwellings on the night of the census. As indicated earlier, this group is dominated by older persons (especially females) with a fifth being aged over 70 years. However, there is also a large representation of young adults, especially males, many of whom would be living in barracks, tertiary education colleges etc., as well as others who were travelling at the time of the census. It will be noted also that there were some dependent children among the non-private dwelling population, although they are a very minor element in that population. Many of them would have been in caravan parks, boarding schools or in transit on the night of the census.

Figure 11 shows the age-sex distribution of household heads (i.e. those designated person one) of the 8 major family types identified earlier and graphically points to huge disparities between the different types of families. For the single person family³, as is the case in North America

Figure 11 in here

(e.g. Harrison, 1981, 17) there are two distinct bulges in the age pyramid for single person households - "one at young adult ages (20-29) and another among the older age groups (particularly 60-79) ... the pyramid compresses at old ages." Hence living alone tends to be concentrated among people in

both the earliest and latter stages of separate household formation. The differences between the sexes are of interest with males living alone outnumbering females in all age groups under 55 and females being overwhelmingly dominant in the older ages, especially among the over 70's. Table 10 shows that among the "young-old" aged between 65 and 74 slightly less than a third of women live alone while among those aged over 75 some 37.5 per cent are in a single person household. This age distribution has several important policy implications. For young people living alone

TABLE 10 in here

is frequently an assertion of independence and a prelude to marriage and family formation but among older people living alone is too often associated with loneliness, disengagement from society and need for services.

Given that single person households are among the fastest growing of all household types it is important to establish whether there is any difference between the two major age groups in such families in their rates of growth. Table 11 shows that during the 1976-81 intercensal

TABLE 11 in here

period the young adult bulge in the age pyramid of single person householders grew considerably faster than that of aged 60 years or more. Although the under 30's age group accounts for only a quarter of single person families, the numbers of these young single person families grow by 97 per cent during the 1976-81 period. Much of this growth of course is not of single person households since many of these single person families have one or more non-family individuals cohabiting with them. The overall growth is a function of the postwar baby boom cohorts moving through the age cohorts where they leave the parental home for the first time to set up their own households as individuals or cohabitators with other people to whom they are not related. The other fast growing age group among people living alone, however, is in the middle working age groups between 30 and 44 years where there was a 73 per cent increase in the numbers of single person families. This group still, however, only make up a relatively small proportion of the total number of single person families (16.1 per cent). The reason for this rapid growth is, of course, the huge increase in the incidence of divorce during the

the 1976-81 intercensal period which not only has had the effect of creating a large number of single parent families but also inflating the number of single person families. The older (60+) population accounted for 42 per cent of single person families and although their numbers grew much faster than the total population between the censuses (by 19 per cent) it was by no means as rapid as that at the other end of the age spectrum. However Australia's older population is currently overwhelmingly concentrated in the "young aged" categories and it is clear that the rate of growth of single person families made up of older people will accelerate with the inevitable movement of large numbers of people into the oldest age groups where the probability of death of a partner is high. Hence during the 1980's we can expect this pattern of growth in the number of single person households occupied by older people to increase somewhat.

The second family category to be considered is that of single parent families or "head with dependents" as they are termed in the census. Figure 11 shows that there is an overwhelming predominance of females among the heads of those families. There is also a strong concentration of single parent mothers in the 25 to 34 years age groups so that the bulk of single mothers tend to be in the young adult age groups. The age structure in Figure 11 however shows only the heads of such households, if we consider the entire population living in single parent households we see that this family types' age structure is dominated by young dependent children. This is readily apparent in Figure 12 which shows the age-sex structure of the entire population

FIGURE 12 in here

living within each of the eight family types recognized at the census. Not only is this age structure dominated by young children, a very substantial proportion of Australian children now spend part of their childhood living with only one of their parents, although it is not yet as ubiquitous as the United States where Banc and Weiss (1980, 11) estimate that more than a third of all children born during the 1970's will spend part of their childhood with a single parent.

At the time of the 1981 census in Australia, as Table 12 shows, some 13 percent of children aged less than 15 years and 11 percent of those aged 15 to 19 lived in single parent households. These figures

TABLE 12 in here

are very high⁶, especially when it is borne in mind that they refer only to a single point in time so that the proportion of all children who have spent or will spend at least part of their childhood in a single parent family situation will be considerably higher. The significance of these figures for a whole range of social policies and programmes is obvious. Bane and Weiss (1980, 11) in reporting findings of a longitudinal study of the experience of 5,000 families in the United States concluded the following

"To note simply the trend to more single parent families is to understate the succession of changes a family undergoes. Most single mothers eventually remarry - after an average of 4.5 years. This may be a relatively brief interval for an adult, but is a significant one in a child's life Single parent status is an indicator of a chain of abrupt changes in family status, which not only cause significant psychological stress, but also produce other disruptions that add to the burden of stress. These include, especially, relocation and a reduction in income."

Some of the socio-economic characteristics of Australian single parent families will be examined in later sections of this paper. It is sometimes tacitly assumed that the vast majority of single parent families are formed as a result of the divorce of the parents. However the ABS 1982 sample survey of one third of one per cent of Australian families found that of the nation's 263,700 single parent families only slightly over one third (36.7 per cent) of the parents were divorced while 30.3 per cent were separated, 18.7 per cent had never been married and 14.4 per cent were widowed.

It is difficult to establish change over time in the proportion of Australian children living in single parent households due to changing conventions and definitions being used in the census. However an attempt to compare changes over the 1971-1981 period is shown in Table 13 and although the 1981 data are not directly comparable as the notes of the table indicate, it is apparent that there was a major increase in the chances

TABLE 13 in here

of a child being in a one parent family during the second half of the 1970's.

All Australian single parent families are not included in the "head with dependant" category, some single parents live with other adults in addition to their dependant children and such families make up 1.35 per cent of all families and a fifth of all single parent families. Figure 11 shows that

age-sex distribution of the heads of such households is also dominated by women but by women somewhat older than those heading "head and dependents" families. This would suggest that in these families the "other adults" may frequently be grown up children of the head who are no longer classified as dependents. This is further supported when the entire age structure is examined in Figure 12. This shows that the 15-19 and 20-24 age groups are of much greater significance in these families than in the other single parent family category.

It was shown earlier that families consisting of head and spouse only had, until 1961, long been the second most common Australian family-type. It has traditionally been predominantly made up of, firstly, older couples who are at the "empty nest" stage of the life cycle whereby their children have grown up and left the parental home to set up a separate household and, secondly, recently married young couples establishing themselves before beginning child bearing. In fact the age-sex structure of "heads" of this type of family (Figure 11) and that of all members (Figure 12) reflect this pattern, being dominated by males and with a concentration in the over 50 age group and to a lesser extent the 20-34 age groups. Figure 11 supports the point made earlier about the fact that our retired population is currently in the younger stages of old age so that the predominant family type among the older population is still one of "head and spouse" rather than a widowed single person. However among persons living in "head and spouse" structured families Figure 12 shows clearly that the largest group are in the older working age groups, although it should be noted that there are significant numbers of childless couples in the 20-34 age groups. The latter is due to the fact that there is a strong tendency for young couples to delay childbearing compared to couples in the 50s and 60s and to a lesser extent to a greater proportion of women deciding to remain childless than previously was the case (Wood and Hugo, 1983a).

Given the bimodal nature of the age distribution of this important family type we should establish if there is any significant difference between the two model age categories in the rates of growth of "head and spouse" families. Table 14 shows that over the 1976-81 intercensal period

TABLE 14 in here

growth was well above average in the oldest age categories but the greatest rates of growth in "head and spouse" families was in the 30-44 age group. This was of course partly an age structure effect since this was the age group into which the postwar baby boom cohorts moved

during the late 1970's. However it is also indicative of the increasing number of couples in the baby boom cohorts who have decided to postpone having children until the woman is in her 30's or have decided to remain childless. In fact this dominance of the growth of "head and spouse" families by young adults in concert with the dominance of younger adult age groups in the recent growth of single person households (Table 11) should be stressed. It was pointed out earlier that one and two person families have increased in recent years such that they now account for over half of all Australian families and it is sometimes suggested that this rapid growth is predominantly a function of the ageing of the population. However it is clear from the 1981 census data that, while the importance of the older population among such families should not be overlooked, young adults are a major and faster growing element in one and two person families. Hence while our housing industry is making some belated moves away from an overwhelming emphasis upon three and four bedroom houses for young families to more appropriate housing for the aged population there is little evidence of policies and programmes orientated toward non-aged singles and couples.

The above notwithstanding, it should be pointed out that nearly half of the families comprising a head and spouse are aged 60 years and over and Table 14 shows that they too have grown rapidly through the late 1970's as the bulge in the age pyramid of people born in the 1910's and 1920's moves into the retirement ages. With improved longevity for older men (Wood and Hugo, 1983b) it is certain that the number of households of this type will continue to increase significantly during the rest of the 1980's.

Turning to the stereotypical Australian family-type of "Head, spouse and dependents" the age-sex distribution of household heads in Figure 11 is not surprisingly dominated by males on the younger side of the middle working years. The structure of the total population in Figure 12 also contains no surprises with two distinct bulges - that of parents in the young to middle working age groups and that of school age and infant children. Although we usually think of children growing up in such a family situation it is worth mentioning that only 73.1 per cent of Australian children aged under 15 years were enumerated in this type of family. While considering this family type we should also consider that comprising "Head, spouse, other adults and dependents". Figure 11 shows heads of this family type to have a similar age-sex structure to that of Head, spouse and dependents. It is apparent that the bulk of "other adults" in this category are children of the head and spouse who have grown up and ceased to be dependents but not yet left the parental

home. Hence Figure 12 shows that there is a substantial representation of persons aged 15 to 19 years in the age-sex distribution of all persons living in this type of household. It is perhaps surprising in Figure 12 that there is such a small representation of persons aged 65 years and over since households which have taken in the aged parents or parents-in-law of the household heads (and still had their children at home) are included in this category. This would appear to provide further evidence of a substantial decline in Australians' readiness to set up three generation households when the parents of the householders enter old age. An ABS survey conducted in 1975 found that only 2.6 per cent of two parent Australian families had an aged person sharing their accommodation. As indicated earlier older people are tending to remain in independent living units much longer than previously was the case. The pattern of living arrangements among the Australian aged has become one of maintaining an independent living unit (often an inappropriately large one) as long as is possible and when the onset of disability prevents this, entering some form of institutionalized accommodation without an intermediate stage of living within the family of a son or daughter.

The "head, spouse and other adults" category is the other census defined family-type that could include aged persons living with their adult children. Figure 11 shows that the age-sex distribution of heads of such families closely approximates that for "head, spouse, other adults and dependants" except that it is slightly older. However, the age-sex structure of the total population living in this type of family situation (Figure 12) shows a much greater dominance of the 35-64 and 65+ age groups than in the latter family category. This suggests that the incidence of older people living with their adult children is somewhat greater when those children no longer have dependent children living with them.

The final family category is that of "Head and other adults". Figure 11 shows that this category has an age structure of heads which is dominated by women, especially older women although the age distribution of the total population (Figure 12) living in these families has a considerable representation of young adults. This would suggest a high representation of a single parent (especially mother) living with a grown up child (or children).

Hence each of the family types and the heads of those family types tends to have a distinctive age-sex structure. This has significant

implications for the demand created by families for a range of goods and services, especially housing. It is to a consideration of the type of housing that these family types occupied at the time of the 1981 census that we now turn.

HOUSING OCCUPIED BY DIFFERENT FAMILY TYPES

The 1981 census data also provide some interesting insights into the differences between family types in the type of housing which they occupy. Table 15 shows that more than half (55 per cent) of all single person families occupy detached, separate dwellings. In addition 81 per cent of families comprising only a wife and husband also lived in separate houses. This has led to some commentators suggesting that there is a considerable pool of "under-utilized" housing in Australian cities. Nearly one and a half million of Australia's "separate house" dwellings are occupied by families consisting of one person or a married couple. This represents 39 per cent of the total "detached house" dwelling stock. Most of these occupants are in the older age groups and the house which they currently occupy is the same one in which they brought up their children who have since grown up and moved elsewhere (Hugo, 1983b). The school of thought which designates such housing as "under-utilized" often oversimplifies the situation and has led to proposal of policy measures to force such families into other forms of more compact housing which are deemed more appropriate in order that their present housing is freed up for larger families. While one would recoil from any draconian displacement of occupants of so called "under-utilized" housing, the fact remains that we have very little knowledge of the processes which are currently in operation. For example consider the following questions:

TABLE 15 in here

1. How far is this perceived mismatch of family size and housing structure a function of policies and practices in the private and public housing sectors which have failed to produce sufficient and suitable alternative independent housing for older persons? The housing industry more than many others seems to be guided and preoccupied by the needs of the stereotypical Australian family comprising wife, husband and dependent children, although such families now account for only slightly more than a quarter of the total families.

2. How much is the attachment of older single people and couples to their present dwelling specific to that dwelling and how much to the local area in which social contacts are maintained? If the latter is of significance the provision of reasonable, appropriate higher density housing in the "middle suburbs" of Australian cities may free up lower density housing for younger families and take some pressure off the housing market. It may also produce a greater age-mix in suburbs - a matter of considerable concern to many local governments.⁷

There is a real need for research into this area which establishes what the preferences and needs of older people are regarding housing. It is clear that premature admission to aged care institutions is rife in Australia and survey work would seem to point to many older people suffering from isolation and experiencing difficulty in maintaining large houses and gardens. Consideration of greater and more equitable provision of a range of intermediate housing possibilities which are within the reach of all older people is needed. This must be undertaken in a context of policies which attempt to meet the housing needs of other groups in the city who are currently discriminated against in the existing housing market. The data in Table 15 as well as income and tenure data from the census point to several such groups. Table 15 shows that the lowest representation among families occupying detached houses is for single parent families. This is a reflection of the general pattern of deprivation among this group as will be demonstrated later.

Consideration of the issues raised here, albeit in an over-simplified way, above is imperative. The ageing patterns discussed earlier will mean that the pattern described in Table 15 will be exacerbated in the 1980's. It is made even more urgent by the fact that such trends of the 1980's as increasing unemployment, increases in the number of highly vulnerable groups like single parent families etc. means that there are increasing difficulties in gaining access to appropriate housing among younger families.

INCOME DISTRIBUTION AMONG FAMILY TYPES

In assessing the well-being of families a paramount consideration is the income received by the families. Although there are some problems in interpreting the income data from the census it is indicative of some

of the differences in economic well-being of the various family types. Table 16 summarizes these differences between family types in the level of weekly income. Again it is the single parent family which shows up as being the least well off with half earning less than \$115 per week in 1981. This applies to less than 1 per cent of two parent families and less than a quarter of husband and wife households. The highest family income levels occur in the head, spouse and dependent category in which more than two thirds of families earned over \$232 per week. There were also relatively high average income levels in families in which there were several adults, which is obviously indicative of a high incidence of multiple income earners in such families.

TABLE 16 in here

One of the most important social changes which has impinged upon the structure and function of Australian families during the postwar period has been the major rise in women's labour force participation. This of course has been associated with a marked increase in the proportion of families with two or more workers. The extent of this change is strikingly apparent in Figures 13 and 14 which are taken from Hull (1982, 8) who

FIGURES 13 and 14 around here

summarizes the situation thus "... women, whether married or not, have moved into the labour force in a major way since the thirties such that today over half of all women are in the labour force at any given time, and over ninety per cent participate at some time during their lives." It can be seen from Figure 13 that the major increase in participation of women in the work force, especially in the main child-bearing ages of the twenties and thirties as well as the forties and early fifties, occurred in each intercensal period between 1961 and 1976. It will be noted in the diagram that the most recent intercensal period (1976-81) saw the smallest increments in participation among women aged between 25 and 50 of the postwar period while there was a reduction in participation

of older women in the workforce. Thus the late seventies have seen a considerable departure from the trends of the earlier part of the postwar period although it is unclear to what extent this is a function of female participation in the workforce having reached some kind of ceiling and how much it is due to the downturn in the economy and increased levels of unemployment. The pattern for married women for the 1976-81 period is similar to that for all women, with only small increases in the level of participation of women in the childbearing age groups. Nevertheless the fact remains that more than 50 per cent of married women in their early '20's, in their 30's and 40's were working outside the home. The bimodal pattern in both Figures 13 and 14 reflects the pattern of many women leaving the workforce temporarily in their late 20's and early 30's to have children but returning once they have completed their childbearing. This contrasts with the shape of the distribution in earlier years, especially for married women when women previously tended to leave the workforce entirely after beginning childbearing. There is a clear pattern of women in all age categories who are wage and salary earners having substantially lower fertility than those not in the workforce (Wood and Hugo, 1983a).

We will now look closely at the labour-force participation of women living in some of the family-type situations discussed earlier. Figure 15 indicates the proportions of young women living in "head and spouse" and

FIGURE 15 here

"head, spouse and dependents" families who were in the workforce in 1981. This shows that around 80 per cent of women aged 20-34 living with a spouse and with no dependents were in the labour force. This fell to only half for women aged 35 to 39 which would seem to suggest a significant number of women of that age group dropping out of the workforce, perhaps to have their delayed first child. For women living with a spouse and dependents the pattern is quite different with a gradual increase in the proportions working outside the home in each five year age group until more than a half of such women aged in their late thirties are in the workforce. This pattern is of course reflective of the now dominant situation in Australia of young women postponing childbearing and extending the period after marriage when they participate in

the workforce and also of women returning to the workforce after temporarily leaving it to have their children.

Associated with these changes in labour force participation among women has been a major shift in the ways families derive their economic support. In the bulk of single parent families and the majority of single person families women are of course the major (and usually only) breadwinners. However it is clear from the above that they also are contributors to the incomes of the majority of families in which there is a husband present. The extent and significance of this contribution is apparent in Table 17 in which the income earned by individual women is cross tabulated against the total income reported for their families. The data presented in the table is only

TABLE 17 here

for the women who are living with a spouse only or a spouse and dependents. In the case of women living with a spouse only, 28 per cent earned an individual income which was in the same income category as the total family income, so that the contribution of their spouse to the total family income was little or nothing. In the case of women in conventional head, spouse and dependent families the proportion was considerably smaller with only 6 per cent of husbands contributing little or nothing to total family income. However if one adds the number of women whose individual income is in the next lowest category to their families' total income to those with an individual income in the same category of the family income the proportion rises to 24 per cent of all "head, spouse and dependent" families. In this group the women are definitely the major breadwinners in the family although there are significant, albeit smaller contributions from other sources. It will also be noted that the dominance of the female income in the family income is greatest in the lowest family income categories. Among families reporting incomes lower than \$15,000 per year (about one third of all head, spouse and dependent families in 1981) two thirds were families in which women were the only or dominant breadwinner.

The data in Table 17 should lay to rest any lingering attachment to the stereotype of families in which there is a husband and wife present as

being where "... family income is synonymous with the male's income, occupational status with the male's occupation, commuting preferences with the male's journey to work" (Stapleton, 1980, 1105). Only in 30 per cent of "head, spouse and children", and 21 per cent of "head and spouse", families do women not contribute income earned outside the house. Hence we should be thinking in terms of "dual headed" households not only in collection of statistics but in any social or economic analysis or theory which relates to households or families (Stapleton, 1980, 1102).

THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY TYPES

One demographic dimension of the changing Australian family which is frequently overlooked is that of the spatial distribution. Not only is Australia's population distribution changing between states, between urban and rural areas and within cities³, but the various types of families and households we have considered in this paper are not randomly distributed such that their spatial pattern duplicates that of the total population. Indeed identification and analysis of the distinctive spatial distribution patterns of these family types is often helpful not only in assisting our understanding of the social and economic processes shaping patterns of family formation but also in targetting the provision of services especially needed by particular types of households.

One measure of the degree to which the various family types are spatially segregated compared to all families is the Index of Segregation (I_S). This is basically a quantitative statement of the evenness of the distribution of a sub-group in a population in relation to that of the entire population of which it is a part. The index can be interpreted as the percentage of a particular sub-population (e.g. single person families) who would have to change their local government area (l.g.a.) of residence if the relative distribution of that sub-group between all l.g.a.'s is to be exactly the same as that of the total population (i.e. all families). An index of 0 would mean that the two populations had exactly the same relative distribution while one of 100 represents a complete "apartheid" situation in which single parent families were exclusively located in areas in which only that type of family lived. Table 18 shows the I_S for several family types for South Australia for 1981 and these are typical of those recorded

TABLE 18 here

in other states. This shows that the most spatially concentrated family type are single person families more than a fifth of whom would have to change their l.g.a. of residence to duplicate the distribution pattern of all families. A similar I_S was recorded by the major family-type of two parents and dependent children and one eighth of all single parent families would have to migrate to duplicate the overall pattern. Table 18 also presents the Index of Dissimilarity (I_D) between the various family types and the distribution of the stereotypical Australian family of two parents and children. Here a considerably greater degree of spatial separation is in evidence.

Hence in the aggregate measures employed here a moderate degree of spatial separation between various family types is in evidence. This raises the question of what types of localities tend to have high concentrations of each of the particular family types. There is insufficient space here to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the details of the spatial distribution of various family types but we will summarize a few of the major patterns. Figure 16 shows the distribution of l.g.a.'s in South Australia with high

FIGURE 16 here

concentrations of two family types. Again these are fairly representative of patterns in other states which are dealt with more comprehensively elsewhere.⁹ The following are some of the major distinctive features of the spatial distribution of the various family types.

1. Single person households show a distinctive pattern with the majority of l.g.a.'s with a high proportion of this type being located in the large metropolitan cities. Most of the metropolitan l.g.a.'s with high proportions of persons living alone are located in the inner suburban areas such as North Sydney (29%), Sydney (27%), St. Kilda (28%), Prahran, (27%), New Farm (30%) and Turner, ACT (25%). However seaside suburbs which had

been settled since before World War I now have high proportions of retired persons among their residents. These include l.g.a.'s like Manly (16%), Cottesloe (19%) and Glenelg (23%). Some provincial cities also have above average representation of this type of family as do some non-metropolitan seaside communities.

2. Single parent families have a distinctive pattern of distribution. The highest proportions of all families made up of single parent families occur in Queensland and the Northern Territory in l.g.a.'s with substantial Aboriginal populations (e.g. Torres and Aurubun 15 per cent, Carpentaria 13 per cent, East Arnhem 14 per cent). However, there are also high representations in some of the lower status outer and middle suburbs of the major metropolitan areas such as Campbelltown (9%), Kwinana (9%) and Kingston A.C.T. (15%). This applies especially to areas in which state Housing Authority housing is available. In South Australia for example 29 per cent of all single parent families are in S.A. Housing Trust accommodation and hence there are high representations of this family type in Elizabeth (11%), Light (9%), Munno Para (8%) and the provincial city of Whyalla (7%). In poorer inner suburbs in some of the major cities there are also above average representations of single parent families (e.g. South Sydney 8%, Collingwood 9%, Richmond 7%). Clearly the deprivation of many single parent families greatly constrains the housing options open to them.
3. Families comprising head and spouse only are especially dominant in two types of areas - middle suburbs developed during the early postwar years and retirement communities. In the former case there are large numbers of couples who have reached the "child launching" stage of the traditional life cycle. In the latter there are large numbers of recently retired "young aged" couples. There is also some representation in some of the more gentrified middle and inner suburbs of the major cities.
4. With respect to the dual parent and children type of household

it is not surprising to find very high concentrations (in excess of 50%) of all local families in the outer suburbs of the major cities. Clearly these "mortgage belt" areas are dominated by families in the early stages of family formation.

CONCLUSION

The changing demography of Australian families and households has profound implications in a wide range of areas. Identification and analysis of changes in the number of families and households, their composition, structure and distribution and explaining those changes is of interest for many reasons. These trends are indicative of how Australian society is changing and an understanding of them is basic to the academic study of many elements of change in our society. Moreover they are also of use in providing indications of changing levels of demand and need for a range of services and goods within both the private and public sectors. As Norton and Glick (1979, 19) point out these trends are important indicators

"... to consumer marketers and a guide to public service planners. Many large purchases - homes, appliances, furniture, automobiles and the like - are made on a household unit basis rather than a one per person basis. Additionally different kinds of households have different economic patterns."

The aim here has been a modest one, to utilize preliminary analyses of 1981 census results to chart where possible recent trends in the size, characteristics and structure of Australian families and households in the last decade or so. These changes have indeed been major, to such an extent in fact that they have to some extent outpaced changes in the concepts and procedures used to collect family statistics at the census. It is apparent for example that our data are not adequate for analysis of alternative living arrangements among Australians who are not related by blood or marriage to each other. The use of the concept of "primary households" employed by the U.S. Bureau of Census since 1947 is worth investigating in this context (Stapleton-Concord, 1982) as are the introduction of a "partner or room mate" response category for household relationships. The latter was used at the 1980 U.S. Census and provided easy recognition of unmarried adults sharing living quarters with non-relatives (Glick and Norton, 1980, 21). There are several other areas which need attention which have been

mentioned in this paper however it should be mentioned that the results of the 1901 census do present us with an unprecedented opportunity for demographic analysis of the Australian family. In this respect the unit record sample tapes of households and individuals are especially important.

Much of the theory and methods employed in social science research in Australia is predicated implicitly or explicitly upon traditional life cycle ideas. As Stapleton (1980, 1103) has pointed out with respect to urban geography research

"Although the traditional family household (one male wage earner, plus spouse not earning and children) has now become a statistical abnormality, much of the research in urban geography continues to assume the less and less acceptable notion of an individual's progression through traditional life cycle stages."

Clearly the life cycle stage models advanced by Rossi (1955) and Simmons (1968) have limited applicability to the contemporary Australian family. To take one example the family environment in which a majority of children grow up has been transformed with reductions in family size, acceleration of rates of family dissolution, and work outside the home being the norm for married women. What are the implications of these changes for child development and child welfare? It is clear that analysis of census data such as that undertaken here can tell only part of the story of change in Australian families and households. By charting the extent, and characteristics of change however they do provide a necessary backdrop and starting point for detailed studies aimed at seeking a deeper understanding of these changes and a full appreciation of their social and economic implications. Demographers are sometimes accused by social science colleagues of sterile "number crunching" of census data yet the statistics presented in this paper are far from being cold abstract figures - they tell several profoundly human stories. They are indicative of some very distinctive shifts in the most fundamental of our society's institutions. The extent of these drastic changes in the socio-demographic indicators briefly examined here demands the attention of policy maker and researcher alike.

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NOTES

1. The present paper is based largely upon analysis of the results of the 1981 census which is being conducted at Flinders University in the National Institute of Labour Studies. The project which began in 1982 and is due for completion at the end of 1984 involves partly updating of the National Population Inquiry published in 1975 and partly a policy-focused analysis of the 1981 census, the results of which can be readily interpreted and used by planners and policy makers. The results are being disseminated through a series of Working Papers being published jointly by the National Institute of Labour Studies and the Population Branch of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. The present paper is based largely upon the more detailed analyses contained in Working Papers 9 and 10 of the series.
2. For example the terms of reference of the National Population Inquiry (1975, 1978) contained only relatively limited elements of household and family demography (e.g. see Di Iulio, 1976).
3. It should be noted that these data grossly underestimate the numbers of Australians cohabiting with unrelated individuals since they exclude all the heads of households in which such cohabitation occurs. The heads of those households were classified as single person families if there is no other person present in the household who was related to the head.
4. Again we should emphasise that these figures grossly understate (by perhaps a third) the incidence of cohabitation since the heads of households living in private dwellings are considered as family individuals. Thus conservative estimates of the proportions of Australians cohabiting with unrelated individuals would be around 7 per cent of those aged 15 to 19, 15-18 per cent of those 20-24 and 6-8 per cent of those aged 25-34.
5. It must be remembered that a quarter (273,635) of all single person families are not single person households. They are households (usually of two persons) in which the other member(s) are not related to the household head.
6. The figures are inflated by an unknown amount by the fact that in some cases in this category the spouse of the head of household was only temporarily absent on the night of the census. It should be noted, however, that the 1982 ABS family survey in which this factor was not significant, 263,700 one parent families were identified - a comparable figure to those identified at the census (ABS, 1982).
7. There is already some evidence in Metropolitan Adelaide that there is a considerable demand among older people occupying detached dwellings to move to more appropriate types of housing within their local area so that they can maintain the social networks which they have established (Downie, 1980). One third of the current activity of the South Australian Housing Trust is in constructing independent

"cottage-type" apartments for older people and more than a half of people moving into those were formerly tenants of larger houses owned by the Trust (Bethune, 1983).

8. For a more detailed analysis see Hugo, 1983a and b.
9. See Census Project Working Paper No. 9.

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Table 1: Australian Changing Size of Households 1947-81
(Source: ABS 1947, 1954, 1976 and 1981 Censuses)

No. of Persons in Household	1947		1954		1976		1981		Percent Change 1947-81	Percent Change 1976-81
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	152,029	8.1	213,088	9.0	649,646	15.7	839,301	10.0	+452.0	+29.2
2	380,227	20.2	545,706	23.2	1,164,967	28.1	1,361,530	29.1	+258.1	+16.9
3	405,459	21.6	495,054	21.1	716,625	17.3	788,914	16.9	+94.6	+10.1
4	383,095	20.4	491,598	20.5	801,736	19.4	890,760	19.1	+132.5	+11.1
5	254,663	13.5	309,292	13.1	465,349	11.2	488,146	10.5	+91.7	+4.9
6	146,327	7.7	160,779	6.9	208,567	5.0	191,650	4.1	-32.6	-8.2
7	76,676	4.1	75,474	3.2	78,927	1.9	65,784	1.4	-14.2	-16.7
8+	77,147	4.1	64,550	2.7	54,704	1.3	43,036	0.9	-44.2	-21.3
Total	1,873,623	100	2,343,421	100	4,140,521	100	4,688,900	100	+150.2	+12.8

Table 2: Australian Changing Household Membership Rates in Major Age Groups 1976 and 1981 (Source: ABS, Censuses of 1976 and 1981)

Age Group	1976	1981
15-24	12.9	14.7
25-34	44.4	46.8
35-44	50.4	52.6
45-54	52.6	54.0
55-64	55.1	56.2
65+	57.3	58.9

Table 3: Australian Distribution of Family Types at the 1966, 1971, 1976 and 1981 Censuses (Source: ABS)

FAMILY TYPE	1966		1971		1976		1981		PERCENT CHANGE	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	1976-1971	1981-1976
1. Head Only	516,774	15.71	665,938	17.56	842,405	19.62	1,113,134	23.12	+32.1	+115.4
2. Head and Dependents Only	110,531	3.36	122,727	3.23	160,483	3.77	282,061	5.24	+50.0	+128.0
3. Head and Spouse Only	864,773	20.21	822,645	21.69	955,336	22.47	1,063,317	22.69	+11.3	+55.9
4. Head, Spouse and Dependents	1,009,913	30.70	1,150,719	30.55	1,223,408	29.02	1,378,502	29.64	+11.7	+26.4
5. Head and Other Adults only	196,575	5.97	193,986	5.11	200,883	4.73	223,369	4.64	+11.1	+13.7
6. Head, Other Adults and Dependents	52,380	1.59	55,690	1.46	60,983	1.43	65,130	1.35	+6.7	+24.3
7. Head, Spouse and Other Adults	340,513	10.35	381,231	9.57	379,931	8.94	369,896	7.68	-2.6	-48.6
8. Head, Spouse, Other Adults and Dependents	397,475	12.00	411,140	10.44	417,649	9.82	340,034	7.23	-16.6	-12.4
TOTAL	3,308,734		3,792,805		4,251,282		4,813,443		+33.2	+48.3
POPULATION	13,400,090		13,067,390		14,033,300		14,923,300		+7.46	+29.6
AVERAGE FAMILY SIZE	3.53		3.45		3.30		3.10		-6.1	-12.2

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Table 4: Australia: Changes in Family Type By Sex of Head of Family 1976-1981.
(Source: Calculated from ABS Censuses of 1976 and 1981)

FAMILY TYPE	MALES			FEMALES			Ratio M:F	
	1976	1981	Percent Change	1976	1981	Percent Change	1976	1981
1. Head Only	364,107	507,106	+39.2	475,843	606,944	+27.5	0.77	0.64
2. Head, Children Only	33,335	24,007	+29.5	137,301	317,170	+34.3	0.17	0.10
3. Head, Spouse Only	922,041	987,994	+7.0	20,509	75,333	+363.3	32.37	13.13
4. Head, Spouse, Children	1,315,543	1,333,207	+0.8	15,370	55,221	+317.0	69.98	23.04
5. Head, Other Adults Only	64,603	70,549	+9.2	136,070	152,020	+12.3	0.47	0.46
6. Head, Other Adults, Children	53,360	12,343	-6.9	47,071	53,491	+9.7	0.38	0.34
7. Head, Spouse, Other Adults, Children	373,630	355,296	-4.7	6,521	16,518	+322.9	57.29	24.49
8. Head, Spouse, Other Adults, Children	414,127	535,006	+30.8	5,399	10,020	+182.2	75.70	30.77
Total	3,306,911	3,637,570	+8.0	854,941	1,595,300	+38.6	3.97	3.06

Table 5: Household Type as a percentage of all Households, Australia and United States 1981. (Source: ABS 1981 Census and Population Reference Bureau, 1982,13)

Household Type	Australia 1981 Census (%)	United States 1981 (%)
<u>Family Households</u>		
Maintained by a Married Couple	66.0	59.0
Man - No Wife Present	0.93	2.3
Woman - No Husband Present	5.5	11.0
<u>Non-Family Households</u>		
Maintained By a Man	10.34	11.3
Maintained By a Woman	15.9	15.5

Table 6: Australia: Number of Families and Persons in Households, 1976-81
(Source: ABS, Censuses of 1976 and 1981)

Households Of ...	Households			Persons		
	No. in 1981	% in 1981	% increase 1976-81	No. in 1981	% in 1981	% increase 1976-81
1 Family	4,529,940	97.0	12.2	13,174,021	94.7	6.3
2 Families	134,719	2.9	34.8	706,893	5.1	35.4
3 Families	3,919	0.1	57.5	32,713	0.2	59.9
4 Families	323	0.0	127.5	4,018	0.0	134.0
Total	4,668,999	100.0	12.8	13,918,445	100.0	7.5

Table 7: Australia: Percentage Distribution of Non-Family and Family Members of Households in Private Dwellings and Persons in Non-Private Dwellings According to the Number of Inmates per Dwelling, 1981 (Source: ABS, 1981 Census One Percent Sample of Individuals)

Persons Per Dwelling	Private Dwellings				Non-Private Dwellings		Total		Percent of Total, Non-Family
	Non-Family		Family		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent					
1	-	-	836,500	6	1,800	-	838,300	6	-
2	159,300	42*	2,560,300	19	3,400	1	2,723,000	19	6
3	88,700	24	2,243,800	17	4,700	1	2,337,200	16	4
4	56,300	15	2,535,100	26*	5,600	1	3,597,200	25*	2
5	30,200	8	2,419,800	18	5,600	1	2,455,600	17	1
6	18,900	5	1,175,700	9	6,600	1	1,201,200	8	2
7	11,600	3	436,400	3	5,900	1	453,900	3	3
8	7,100	2	232,900	2	6,700	1	246,700	1	3
9	1,500	-	68,700	1	5,900	1	76,100	1	2
10-14	2,600	1	63,700	-	31,500	5	97,800	1	3
15-19	-	-	1,600	-	26,600	4	28,200	-	-
20-59	-	-	-	-	152,400	23	152,400	1	-
60+	-	-	-	-	401,200	61*	401,200	3	-
Total	376,400	100	13,574,500	100	657,900	100	14,608,800	100	100
Percent	2.6		92.9		4.5		100		

* Modal Category

Table 8: Australia: Percentage Age Distribution of Non-Family and Family Members of Households in Private Dwellings and Persons in Non-Private Dwellings, 1981 (Source: ABS, 1981 Census One Percent Sample of Households)

Age Group	Private Dwellings		Non-Private Dwellings	Total Population	Percent of Total, Non-Family	Percent of Total, Non-Private
	Non-Family	Family				
0-14	-	27	13	25	0	2
15-19	17	8	10	9	5	5
20-24	34	8	12	9	10	6
25-34	26	16	15	16	4	4
35-44	7	12	9	12	1	4
45-54	11	20	17	19	1	4
65-74	3	6	6	6	1	6
75+	1	3	15	4	1	19
Total	100	100	100	100	3	5

Table 9: Australia: Non Family Individuals, Living Arrangements
By Age and Sex, 1987, (In Thousands of Persons)
(Source: ABS, 1987, 10)

Age		Living Arrangements						Total	
		Living With Other Family		Living With Other Person		Living Alone		No.	%
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
15-19	M	6.9	14.0	17.1	7.5	17.5	4.2	41.5	6.0
	F	9.1	36.9	24.0	13.0	16.9	2.8	50.2	6.2
20-24	M	19.9	40.4	84.1	37.0	45.8	11.0	149.8	21.6
	F	7.3	29.0	67.2	36.5	34.9	6.0	109.6	13.6
25-34	M	10.8	21.9	76.1	33.4	83.6	20.1	170.5	24.6
	F	-	-	49.9	27.1	45.4	7.6	99.6	12.4
35-54	M	9.0	18.3	37.3	14.6	106.8	25.7	149.1	21.5
	F	-	-	16.3	8.8	78.5	13.2	97.1	12.1
55-59	M	-	-	-	-	29.1	7.0	32.3	4.7
	F	-	-	6.8	3.7	45.9	7.7	52.7	6.6
60-64	M	-	-	-	-	33.5	8.1	39.3	5.7
	F	-	-	-	-	62.1	10.4	67.0	8.3
65+	M	-	-	9.8	4.3	98.8	23.8	109.7	15.9
	F	-	-	15.9	8.6	110.4	52.2	127.3	40.7
Total	M	49.3	100.0	227.6	100.0	415.1	100.0	692.1	100.0
	F	25.2	100.0	184.2	100.0	594.4	100.0	803.5	100.0

Table 10: Australia: Proportion of Older Persons Living Alone,
1981 (Source: ABS 1981 Census, Cross Classified Tables)

	Age			
	65-74		75 and Over	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Males	56,087	13.4	35,702	19.5
Females	159,769	31.9	122,552	37.5

Table 11: Australia: Single Person Families - Changing Age Structure 1976 and 1981 (Source: ABS Censuses of 1976 and 1981)

HEAD ONLY									
	1976	1981	Percent Change	1976	1981	Percent Change	1976	1981	Total Percent Change
	Males			Females			Total		
<10	74,655	105,743	+122	66,588	111,828	+ 97	141,243	277,571	+ 97
10-44	71,799	122,683	+ 71	31,489	56,301	+ 79	103,288	179,184	+ 73
45-59	79,206	94,744	+ 20	85,014	93,977	+ 11	164,220	188,721	+ 15
60+	101,584	127,897	+ 18	253,693	344,697	+ 17	397,577	467,589	+ 18
Total	365,566	506,291	+ 38	476,819	606,844	+227	871,877	1,113,135	+ 28

Table 12: Australia: Children in Single Parent Families
(Source: ABS 1981 Census, One Percent Sample of Individuals)

Type of Single Parent Family	Age Group			
	0-14		15-19	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Head and Dependants	399,300	10.9	56,900	4.6
Head, Other Adults and Dependants	78,500	2.1	79,400	6.4
Total	477,800	13.0	136,300	11.0

Table 13: Australia: Changes in the Number and Proportion of Children Living in Single Parent Families 1971-81
(Source: ABS, Censuses of 1971, 1976 and 1981)

Year	Children in Single Parent Families		Intercensal Change
	No.	Percent	
1971	328,424	8.3	-
1976	397,070	9.9	+20.9
1981	614,100	12.5	+54.7

Notes: For 1971 and 1976 data for children aged under 16 only, whereas data for 1981 is for children aged less than 20. For 1971 and 1976 ratio of children in Head and Dependants Families to those in Head, Other Adults and Dependants assumed to be same as in 1981

Table 14: Australia: Families Comprising a Head and Spouse - Changing Age Structure, 1976 and 1981
(Source: ABS Censuses of 1976 and 1981)

	HEAD AND SPOUSE								Total Percent Change
	1976	1981	Percent Change	1976	1981	Percent Change	1976	1981	
	Males			Females			Total		
<30	205,869	181,828	- 12	9,634	25,016	+160	217,703	206,894	- 5
30-44	82,549	106,133	+ 28	2,834	9,594	+210	85,489	115,227	+ 35
45-59	246,894	247,319	+ 1	6,837	17,820	+160	252,693	265,147	+ 5
60+	399,971	452,667	+ 13	9,264	23,374	+152	399,255	476,636	+ 19
Total	826,665	997,945	+ 7	26,671	75,115	+163	955,336	1,063,310	+ 11

Table 15: Australia: Distribution of Family Types by Structure of Dwelling 1981
(Source: ABS 1981 Census)

FAMILY TYPE	STRUCTURE OF DWELLING							Not Stated
	Separate House	Semi-Detached House	Row or Terrace House	Other Medium Density	Villas Over 3 Storeys	Caravan, Houseboat etc.	Improved Home	Dwelling Non-Due to Combined
Head Only	55.16	4.39	2.55	36.87	3.78	0.65	0.30	1.87
Head with Dependents	74.27	4.95	1.44	14.71	1.76	0.37	0.37	1.37
Head and Spouse Only	80.78	3.88	0.98	11.37	1.43	0.41	0.15	1.37
Head, Spouse and Dependents	89.88	3.89	0.69	4.51	0.49	0.34	0.19	1.26
Head and Other Adults Only	77.38	3.89	1.51	13.48	1.77	0.16	0.13	1.13
Head, Other Adults and Dependents	83.77	3.87	1.83	7.77	1.10	0.19	0.29	1.25
Head, Spouse and Other Adults	81.76	2.81	0.96	3.38	0.48	0.12	0.07	1.05
Head, Spouse, Other Adults and Dependents	93.10	1.66	0.46	2.16	0.5	0.13	0.17	1.12
TOTAL	78.70	2.95	1.21	12.67	1.50	0.38	0.20	1.43

Table 16: Australia: Weekly Family Income of Family Type, 1981
(Source: ABS 1981 One Percent Census Sample Tape)

FAMILY TYPE	WEEKLY FAMILY INCOME							Not Stated
	None	<\$77	\$78-154	\$155-288	\$289-500	\$501+		
Head Only	2	17	14	41	12	1		1
Head and Dependents	3	14	58	19	4	1		2
Head and Spouse Only	1	1	21	23	32	16		5
Head, Spouse and Dependents	1	1	10	37	32	10		10
Head and Other Adults Only	3	38	16	34	6	1		2
Head, Other Adults and Dependents	3	16	53	21	3	1		3
Head, Spouse and Other Adults	1	1	23	31	29	8		7
Head, Spouse, Other Adults and Dependents	1	1	17	37	31	8		9
TOTAL	1	4	20	34	20	6		5

Table 17: Australia: Individual Income of Women Living in 'Head and Spouse' Families and Women Living in 'Head, Spouse and Dependents' Families According to Total Family Income 1981 (Source: ABS 1981 Census, One Percent Sample of Individuals)

INDIVIDUAL INCOME OF WOMEN	TOTAL FAMILY INCOME									
	Head and Spouse Only Family									
	None	Less than \$10,000	\$10,001- \$15,000	\$15,001- \$22,000	\$22,001- \$26,000	Over \$26,000	Not Stated	Total		
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No.	%	No. %
None	74 4	376 20	822 43	434 23	96 5	97 5	10 1	1,909	100	
Less than \$10,000	0 -	2,194 47	405 17	1,066 23	317 7	257 6	14 0	4,643	100	
\$10,001-\$15,000	0 -	0 -	52 4	79 6	558 39	720 51	9 1	1,418	100	
\$15,001-\$22,000	0 -	0 -	0 -	23 6	13 3	343 90	3 1	382	100	
\$22,001-\$26,000	0 -	0 -	0 -	0 -	2 6	33 92	1 3	36	100	
Over \$26,000	0 -	0 -	0 -	0 -	0 -	32 100	0 -	32	100	
Not Stated	0 -	0 -	0 -	0 -	0 -	8 2	389 98	397	100	
Total	74 1	2,560 29	1,679 18	1,602 18	986 11	1,490 17	426 5	8,817	100	
Head, Spouse and Dependents Family										
None	42 1	478 15	1,180 38	965 31	194 6	237 8	26 1	3,122	100	
Less than \$10,000	0 -	454 9	1,148 23	2,047 40	636 13	760 15	73 0	5,065	100	
\$10,001-\$15,000	0 -	0 -	25 3	54 6	334 34	554 57	8 1	975	100	
\$15,001-\$22,000	0 -	0 -	0 -	10 3	8 3	299 94	1 0	318	100	
\$22,001-\$26,000	0 -	0 -	0 -	0 -	2 5	35 95	0 -	37	100	
Over \$26,000	0 -	0 -	0 -	0 -	0 -	35 100	0 -	35	100	
Not Stated	0 -	0 -	0 -	0 -	0 -	33 5	678 95	711	100	
Total	42 0	929 9	2,353 23	3,076 30	1,174 11	1,953 19	736 7	10,263	100	

Table 18: South Australia: Indices of Segregation for Various Types of Families and All Families in Local Government Areas at the 1981 Census (Source: ABS, 1981 Census, LGA Summary File)

Family Type	Index of Segregation	Index of Dissimilarity ¹
Head Only	21.6	31
Head and Dependents	12.8	17
Head and Spouse	7.4	19
Head, Spouse and Dependents	20.9	-
Head and Other Adults	13.2	28

¹ Note that this is for the designated family type compared to the distribution of Head, Spouse and Adult families

Figure 1. Australia: Average Annual Growth Rates of Total Population and Number of Households
(Source: Based on Data Provided in National Population Inquiry 1978, 90 and 1981 Census)

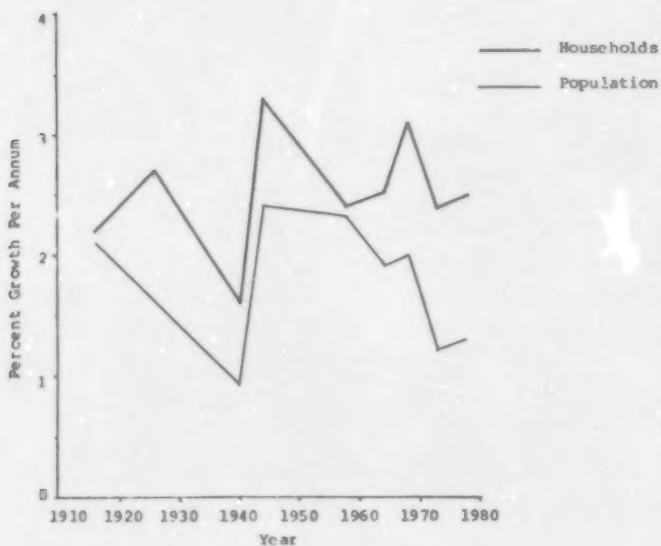
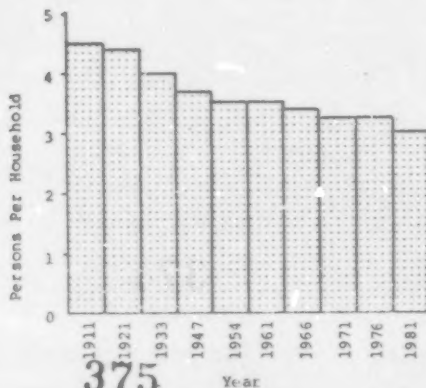


Figure 2 Australia: Changes in Average Household Size 1911-1981
(Source: ABS Various Censuses)



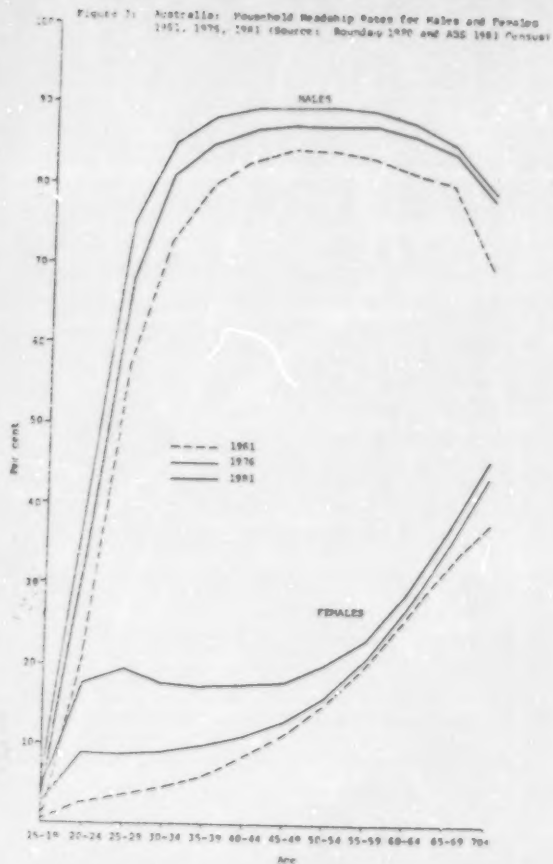


Figure 4: Australia: Age-Sex Structure of the Population 1961 and 1981 (Source: ABS)

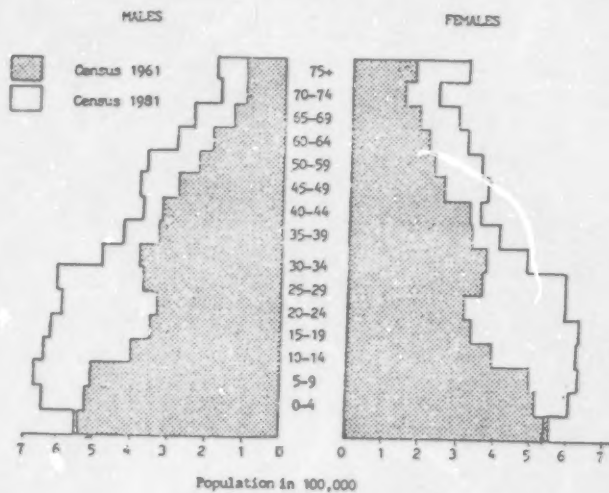
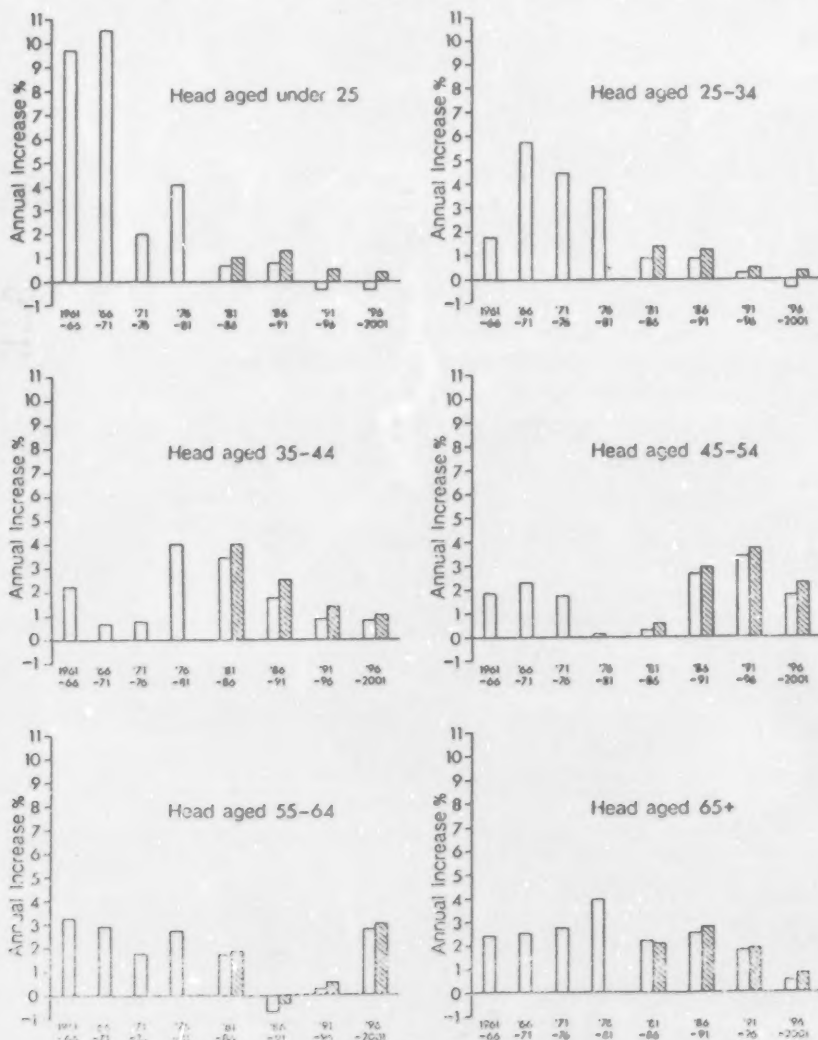


Figure 5: Australia: Annual Percentage Increase in Households by Age of Head 1961-1981 and Projections 1981-2001
(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics and Di Iulio 1976, 20)



Percentage Increase actual & projected where annual net migration = 0 p.a.
Percentage Increase projected where annual net migration = 50,000 persons gain p.a.

Figure 6: Australia: Percent of Males and Females Never Married in Particular Age Groups at Censuses Between 1921 and 1991 (Sources: McDonald 1998, 18 and ABS 1991 Census)

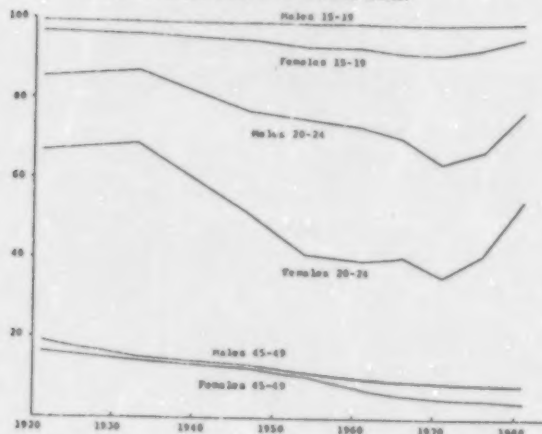


Figure 7: Percentage of Females Never Married by Age 1971, 1976 and 1991 (Source: ABS Censuses of 1971, 1976, 1991)

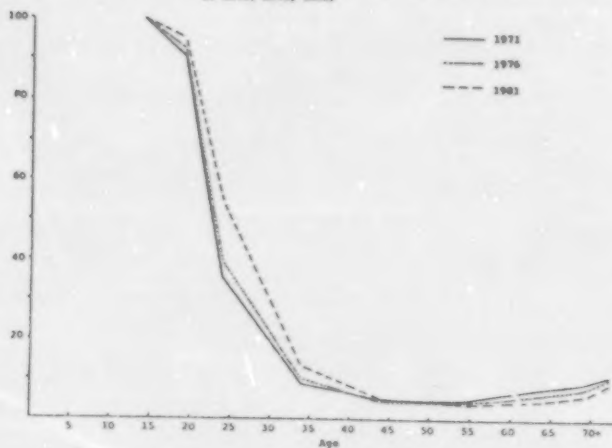
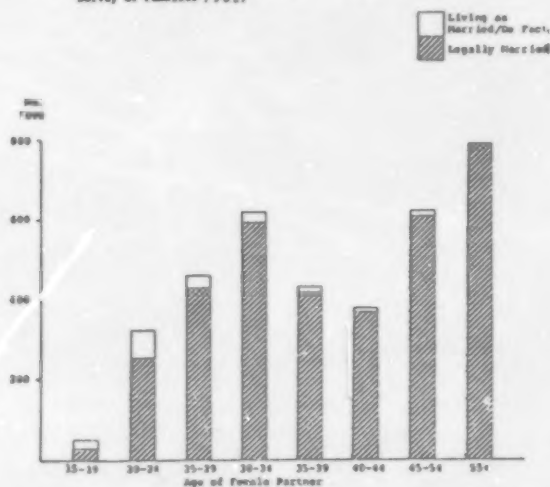


Figure 8: Australia: Married Couple Families: Form of Marriage According to Age of Female Partner, 1982 (Source: ABS Survey of Families 1982)



female partner. The survey shows a significant incidence at all ages between 15 and 54 although the proportion of de facto marriages falls off

Figure 9: Australia: Percentage of Females Separated or Divorced by Age 1971, 1976 and 1981 (Source: ABS Censuses of 1971, 1976 and 1981)

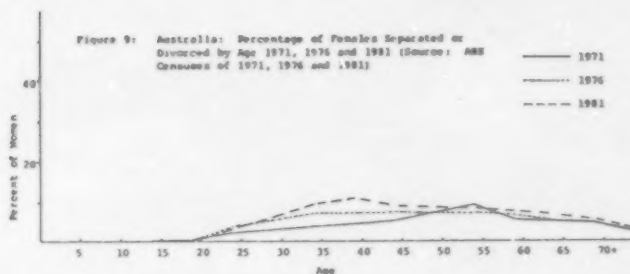


Figure 10: Australia: Age-Sex Structure of the Populations Living in Private Dwellings (13.92 million persons) and in Non Private Dwellings (638,309), 1981
(Source: ABS, 1981 Census of Population and Housing)

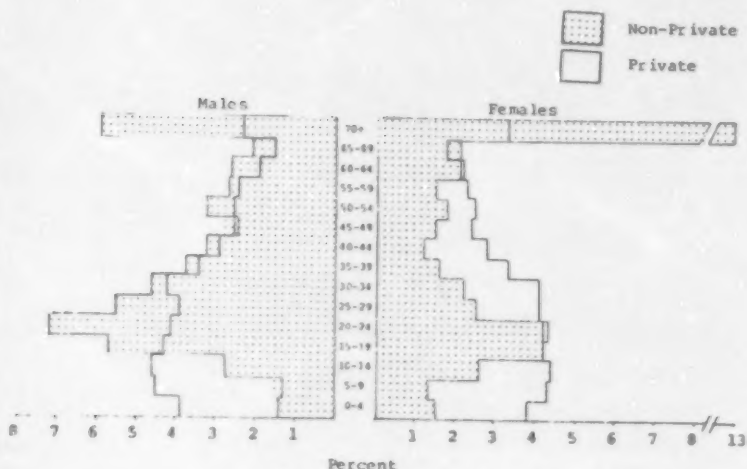


Figure 15: AUSTRALIA: WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE FOR FAMILY TYPE HEAD AND SPOUSE, AND HEAD, SPOUSE AND DEPENDANTS (Source: ABS 1991 Censuses, One Percent Sample tape)

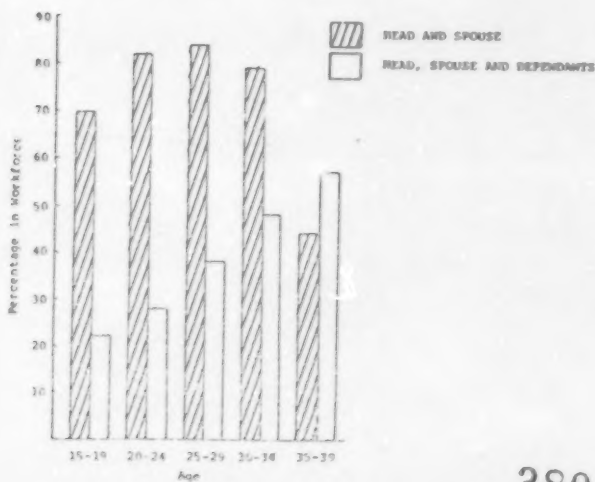


Figure 11: Australia: Age-Sex Structure of Household Heads According to Family Type, 1981 (Source: ABS, 1981 Census Cross Classified Tables)

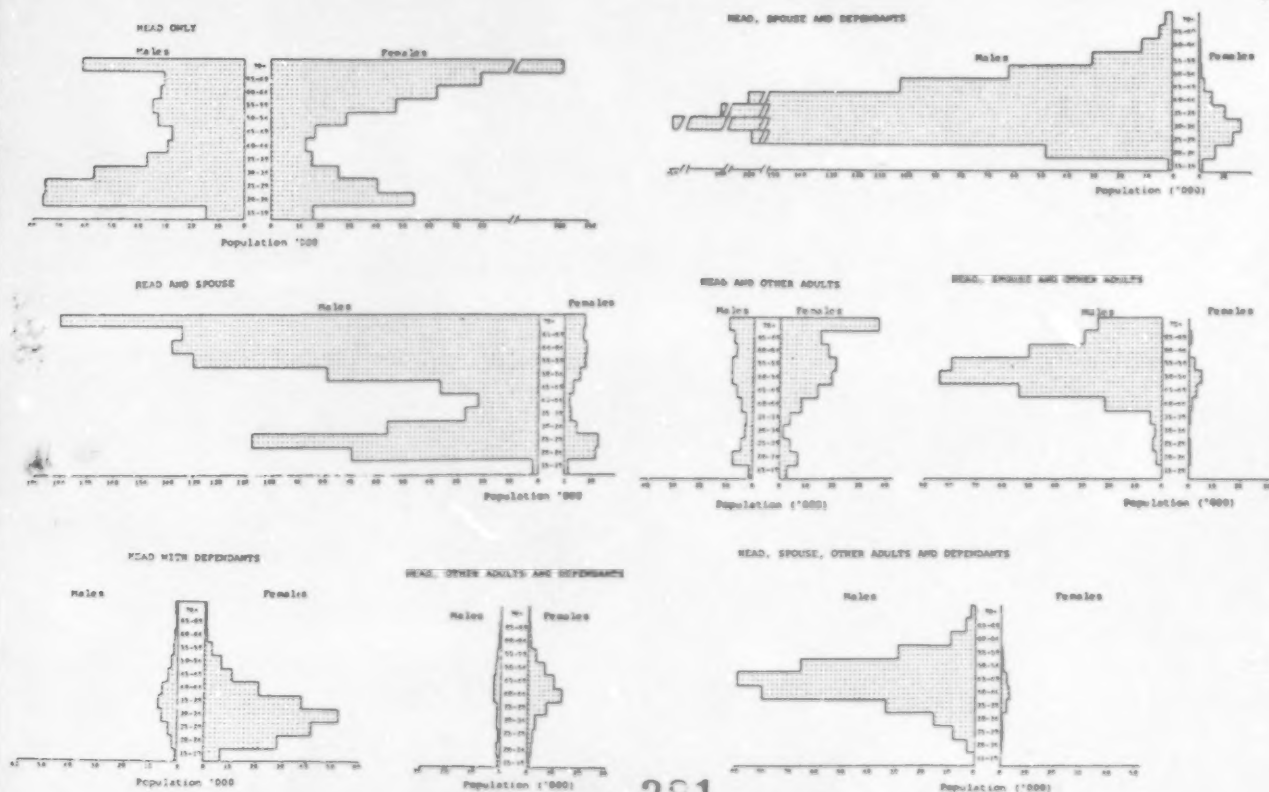


Figure 12: Australia: Age-Sex Distribution Within Family Types, 1981
(Source: ABS 1981 Census One Percent Sample of Individuals)

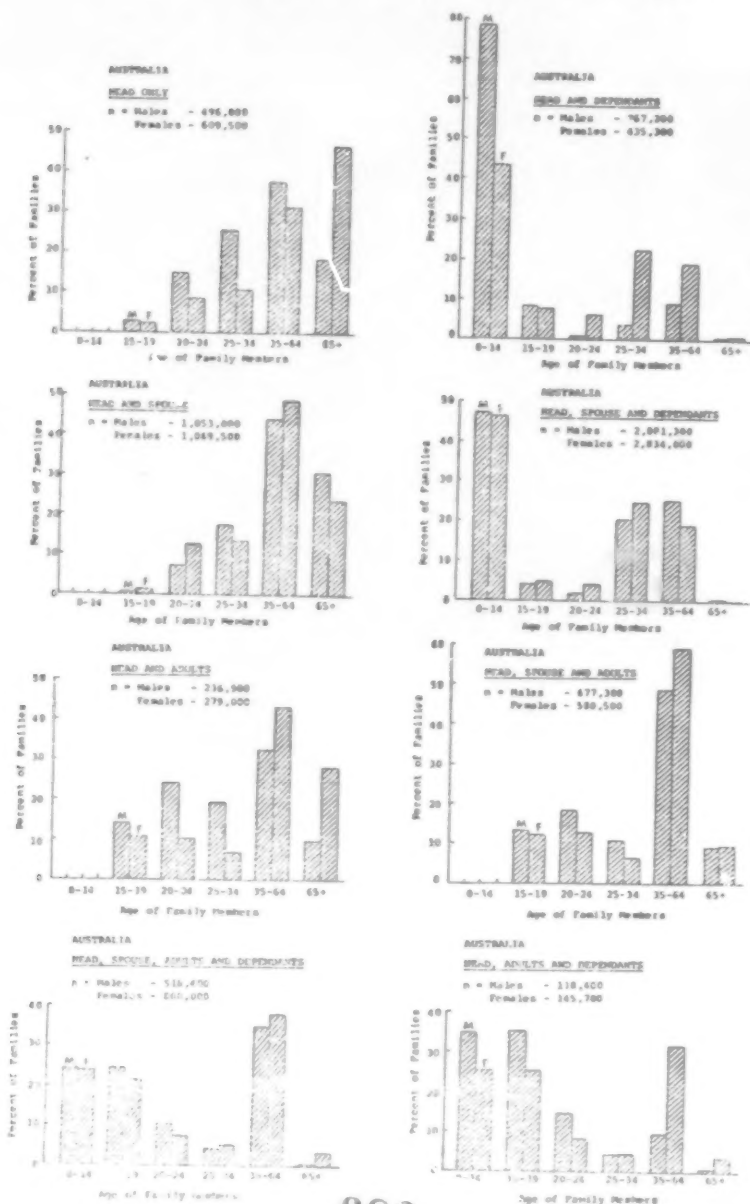


Figure 13: Australia: Female Labour Force Participation Rates by Age at Censuses Between 1911-1981

(Source: Hall, 1992)

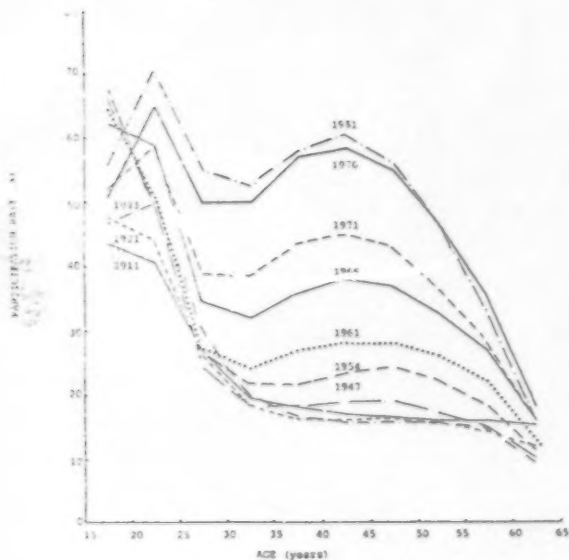


Figure 14: Australia: Married Female Labour Force Participation Rates by Age at Censuses between 1933 and 1981

(Source: Hall, 1992)

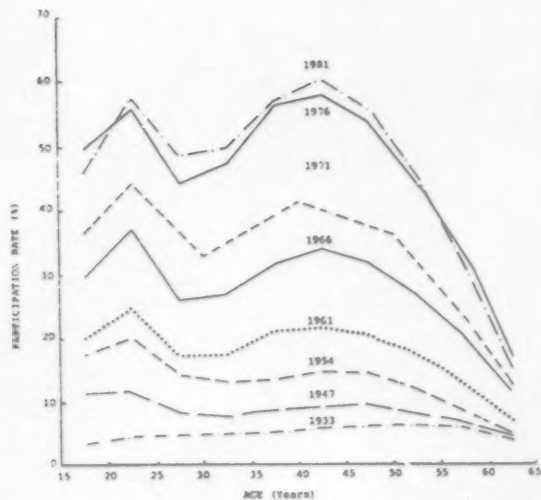
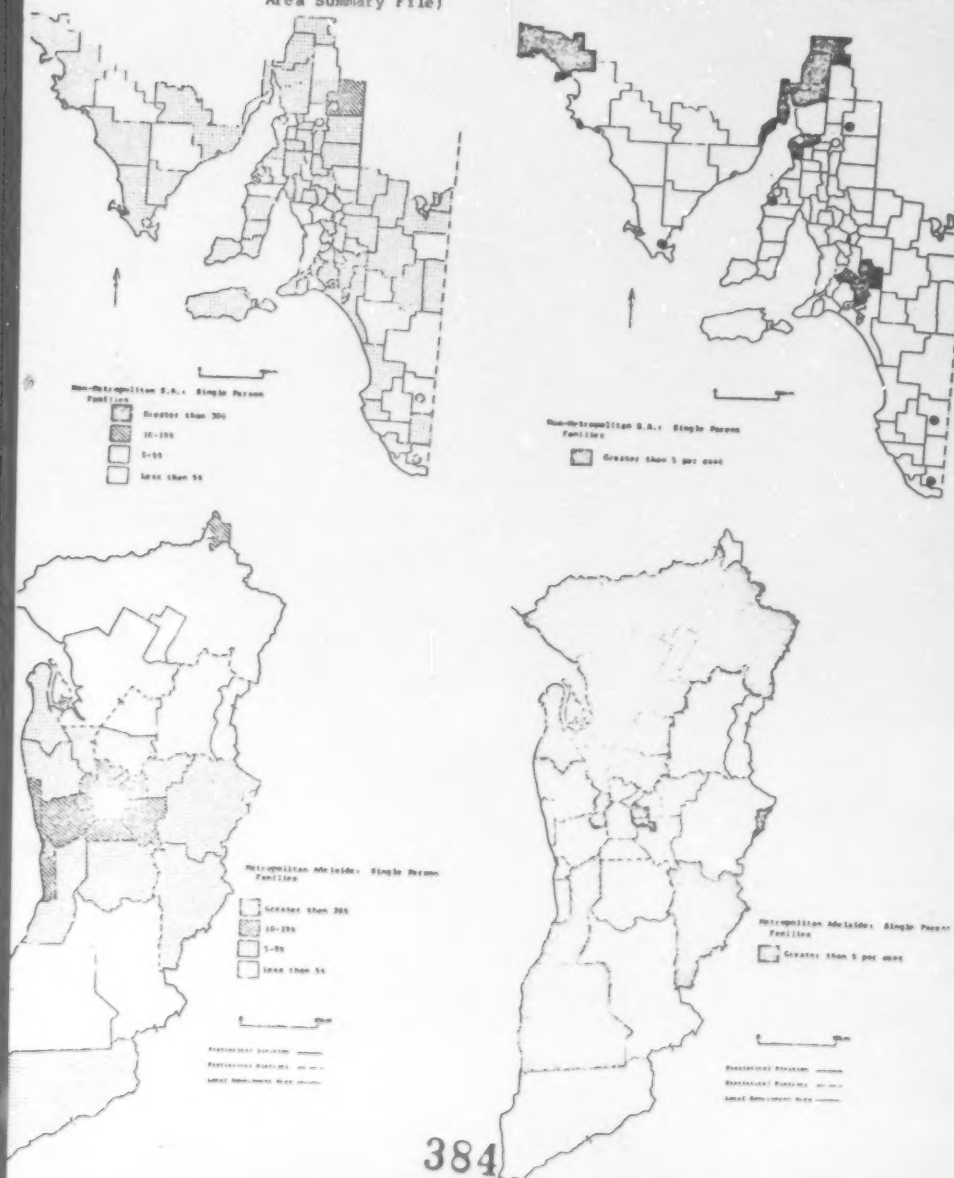


Figure 16: South Australia: Distribution of Single Person and Single Parent Families, 1981 (Source: ABS, 1981 Census Local Government Area Summary File)



Changes in aboriginal family formation and fertility

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Introduction.

In the late 1960s, the total fertility rate of the Aboriginal population of Australia was just under six. In the late 1970s, it was a little over three, a decline of more than 40 per cent in a decade. (The total fertility rate is the number of children that a woman would bear if she experienced each of the age specific birth rates of the time.)

This paper deals with two aspects of this important demographic change, which I have described in greater detail elsewhere (Gray, 1983). The two aspects are both concerned with the microeconomy of Aboriginal families. One is a description of a significant prop for high fertility of young Aboriginal women, the other a discussion of how the value of Aboriginal children changed in microeconomic terms in such a way as to precipitate fertility decline. By concentrating on these two aspects of continuity and change, I will in fact be ignoring very important concurrent changes in the delivery of health services to Aboriginal communities which have provided the technology of family planning to Aboriginal women. The omission is deliberate, but not easy to get away with even in a short paper. The justification is that I am dealing with the motivation for fertility behaviour, not the means by which fertility has been regulated.

Before beginning the discussion, it is useful to provide a short description of the parameters of the decline. For present purposes, the information in Table 1 is sufficient to map them out. It can be seen that while there has been some decline in age specific birth rates for all age groups, the brunt of precipitate decline has been borne by the older age groups. Fertility above age 30 has fallen by 76 per cent between 1966-71 and 1976-81, while below age 30 it has fallen by less than a third of that. Below age 20, it has changed very little over the entire period shown. These estimates are based on a rather complicated analysis of census parity data, but while individual age specific rates may contain some margin of error, this broad pattern of change can be verified in various independent ways (Gray, 1983).

[Table 1 about here]

When disaggregated in geographic terms, in the second part of Table 1, total fertility rates can be seen to have had different levels in different geographical areas and also to have begun to decline at different points in time. In major urban areas, that is cities of one hundred thousand people or more each, Aboriginal fertility had apparently been low and falling since the late 1950s. In other urban areas, the decline began in the late 1960s, while in rural areas it did not begin until the start of the 1970s. Such differences could also be found when data for the States were examined separately (Gray, 1982).

The point is that we are not dealing with a single change, but an aggregate of components which have been moving in different directions for a long time. Only some of these component changes can be examined

here. An obvious candidate is the thing which has apparently changed least, namely the age specific birth rate for the 15-19 age group. This declined very slowly over the entire period shown in Table 1, but by a total of only 11 per cent. In the Australian population as a whole, fertility in this age group has been very much lower than in the Aboriginal population: data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1982) indicate that the differential for the late 1950s is a multiplicative factor of 3.7, and for the late 1970s about 4.7. Why has high fertility for young Aboriginal women resisted the influences which have led to aggregate fertility decline? and what are these influences? These are the two questions which this paper addresses.

The Aboriginal Family.

The analysis of the fertility of a society usually proceeds from a set of assumptions, which may be unstated, about the nature of family. Industrial societies and peasant societies alike are characterized by such strong affinity between the concepts of family and household that the terms interchangeably connote the basic economic unit of such societies. Marriage, childbearing, divorce and the raising of children consequently carry strong overtones of economic investment and divestment in these societies. Because family events are so important economically, they are accompanied by important customary trappings, religious ceremony and transactions.

Fertility in nearly all human societies which have been of interest to demographers has therefore been analysed using measures such as age at marriage and length of marriage. Standard frameworks for fertility analysis such as those of Davis and Blake (1956),

Freedman (1975) or Jones (1977) emphasise this approach. Explanation for fertility change, such as Caldwell's (1982) theory of wealth flows, is frequently given an economic interpretation. On the other hand, it is obvious that neither the biological process of human reproduction nor basic measures of fertility depend on either nuptiality or economy. The extent to which variables describing marriage and economic factors are introduced into analysis and the way in which they are introduced is therefore up to the analyst.

All the more, an understanding of contemporary Aboriginal family formation is essential to the descriptive process. Here there is a problem. There is an extensive anthropological literature on kinship and custom in Aboriginal Australia, but a relative dearth of description of the contemporary patterns of formation of Aboriginal families. In Australia, social anthropologists have usually described customs that have remained largely unaffected by contact with non-Aboriginal society or that have evolved, diluted little by European custom. Shapiro (1979: 83-88) describes the main features of such customs where they relate to marriage: polygyny but not polyandry; a large age difference between husbands and wives where the wives are marrying for the first time, so that widowhood and a series of remarriages are common; the existence of 'counter-cultures' with their own rules and standardized procedures for extra-marital or informal sex; and (*ibid.*: 59-74) the anthropologists' delight of marriage eligibility rules determined not only by non-consanguinity but by a complicated structure of moieties, sections and subsections that strictly stipulate who may marry whom.

Writers on contemporary Aboriginal affairs, especially in referring to areas where the classification system of moieties, sections and subsections has disappeared, seem to studiously ignore family formation or mention it only in passing. The reason is explicitly given by Smith and Biddle (1975: 26-27), in a study of Aboriginal people in Brisbane:

One of the more difficult areas in which to gather data using a survey method is that of marriage patterns. From the beginning, study personnel understood the reluctance of respondents to discuss the quality of their marriages ...

No questions were asked about the legal status of marriages, but almost 5 per cent of the respondents volunteered the information that their marriages were of a de facto nature, and it is quite likely that many more fell into this category. In some instances it became clear that a man or a woman had over a period of time a series of marital relationships, generally of a de facto type. This may happen more often with the Aborigines than with white Australians. But since it is difficult to obtain accurate figures for both the incidence of de facto relationships and the extent of remarriage, it must remain a matter for speculation.

Circumspection about the nature of family relationships is one aspect of the phenomenon that Kitaoji (1976: I-5 ff.) has called the 'myth of disorder in the Aboriginal family today'. This myth, which characterizes the non-tribal Aboriginal family as unstable, promiscuous and disorderly, can be traced to two sources (*ibid*: I-6-7). One derives from the anthropologist's inclination to use tribal social organization as the point of reference, the other the non-anthropologist's inclination to compare Aboriginal families to the modal family form in Australia, the nuclear family. Kitaoji goes on to survey the remarkable similarity of contemporary Aboriginal family formation as described by Calley (1969), Reay and Sitlington (1948), Beckett (1958) and Bell (1959) for different communities in New South Wales, Barwick (1969) for Melbourne and Inglis (1961) for Adelaide, and concludes (Kitaoji: I-13):

... contemporary Aborigines have a set of logically and structurally integrated behaviours which form a culture, or social

structure. If this assumption is valid, such behaviour cannot be reduced either to non-Aboriginal Australian or to traditional Aboriginal patterns.

What then are the characteristics of family formation as consistently identified in these studies over a long period of time, and as found by Kitaoji herself (*ibid.*: V-1 ff.) in her study area of the Macleay Valley in New South Wales? The outstanding feature is the toleration of a range of types of sexual union - legal marriage, de facto marriage and casual liaison. Barwick (1974) likens the customs to those of Caribbean countries, with the provision that white Australian disapproval may restrict openness about the customs. What Kitaoji has drawn attention to is that the forms of sexual union form a logically ordered sequence: casual liaison and pregnancy usually precedes the first consensual union, which may or may not be permanent, and consensual marriage usually precedes legal union if the marriage is legalized at all. Childbirth does not necessarily result in the formation of a consensual union between the parents, and it is not always a necessary condition. Conversely the fact of motherhood does not necessarily inhibit a woman's chances of forming a permanent sexual union. Permanent unions are stable, and a consensually-married woman usually takes the title 'Mrs.' and her husband's surname. The main source of regional variation may be in the proportion who marry in church or registry, and the strongest common thread the scale of precedence given above.

Barwick (1974) also points out the commonly-encountered abhorrence of marriage between cousins, especially first cousins.

The essential point is that the contemporary pattern, because it is found everywhere, must be seen as a transformation of the old, tribal pattern. It can be seen as such in several ways. One is the observation, superficial at first glance only, that the legal status of tribal marriages and de facto marriages is the same in non-Aboriginal society, that is their external form is the same viewed from outside the tribal society. Neither form is accompanied by customary trappings as extensive as those accorded to non-Aboriginal marriages, either, so that partners entering a consensual union according to the new pattern can be expected to see little difference between their custom and the tribal custom if they do not follow the latter. Even if they are in a situation where the 'wrongness' of their union by old standards is pointed out, the force of tribal sanctions may be weak. By the old standards, the two common characteristics which have been mentioned - lack of legal status and relative absence of ceremony - are decidedly invisible features of the marriage union. The transformation of the old custom into the new has therefore consisted of a loss of the inflexions and a fixing of the syntax of marriage practice. A common feature of the two customs is the possibility that a woman will enter a series of marriages. Abhorrence of cousin marriage is less a transformation of the old custom than a retention of part of the inflexional system.

It can readily be agreed, on the basis of this discussion, that disorder in contemporary Aboriginal families is indeed a myth. For our purposes, however, the analysis also suggests that it is the nature of the process of family formation which provides the institutional prop for high fertility of young Aboriginal women. This is because fertility is essential to family formation, not

consequential or incidental. Differential fertility analysis (Gray, 1983) affirms this conclusion: it can be shown, unsurprisingly, that family formation accounts for more variation in fertility of young Aboriginal women than any other variable, but more significantly this is almost independent of all socio-economic descriptive variables except length of schooling, and the latter has a strong effect only for the 15-19 age group.

The Value of Children to Aboriginal Parents.

Caldwell (1982: 115-6) argues that in all countries of the world 'there are only two types of fertility regime, with the exception of the situation at the time of transition: one where there is no economic gain to be made by individuals in restricting fertility; and the second where there is often or eventually economic gain in such restriction'. In this formulation all fertility behaviour is economically rational. Where there is no economic gain to be had by restricting fertility, the economically rational response of unlimited fertility is restricted only for personal, social or physiological reasons. Where there is economic gain in restricting one's family size, it is again personal, social and physiological reasons that counteract the economically rational response of having no children at all. Schultz (1983) suggests that this formulation should be modified to take into account the likelihood that the marginal utility of childbearing is a function of actual parity. This criticism does not affect Caldwell's principal observation that high fertility societies, that is societies where children represent an economic gain, are equivalently those societies in which there is a net inter-generational transfer from children to parents. In low

fertility societies, the net inter-generational transfer is from parents to children. Classification of a society into one or the other of these camps, or into the transitional camp, becomes a matter of examining the nature of institutions determining economic, personal, social and physiological reasons for having children or not having children. Caldwell (1982: 155-6) proposes detailed anthropological investigations along these lines. Other research (Espenshade, 1977; Fawcett, 1977) has taken the more direct approach of investigating the reasons themselves, while directing less attention to what determines them.

Despite the sweep of this theoretical framework, it is not immediately apparent that it is suited to examining Aboriginal fertility change. The problem is that economic rationality is not, for many Aboriginal people, something that is totally within their own control. Economic change in most Aboriginal communities remains directed by the institutions of the majority Australian society, despite rhetoric about self-determination and self-management. It might be argued that the only economically rational expectation that an Aboriginal person can have about the outcome of a course of action is that it will produce no economic gain and no economic loss. If this were the case, Aboriginal society could be regarded as permanently transitional, its transitional status being determined by the unequal balance of interaction with the institutions of the majority society. The generalisation ignores three things: the existence of many individuals who have achieved sufficient economic power to be able to assert economically rational behaviour in the terms of the majority society; the existence of communities which have established an independent economic base; and, most importantly,

the existence everywhere of control over residual components of microeconomic activity at the household and community level, in which individual participation is unrestricted. It will be seen that economic considerations at this level are highly relevant to Aboriginal women in decisions about having more children or not.

Five Aboriginal communities, in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland, were visited between 1961 and 1963 to investigate various aspects of the phenomenon of fertility decline. Interview surveys of married women were carried out in all the communities. All women who said that they wanted more children were given a list of reasons for wanting children and asked to state which of the reasons were 'very important', 'a bit important' or 'not important' to them. The list of reasons was randomized for each respondent. A factor analysis was used to separate out eight uncorrelated components of response, using the principal component technique with 'Varimax' rotation. The input variables for this analysis consisted of three dichotomies for each of the reasons for wanting more children: the first dichotomy contrasted women who thought that a reason was important against those who gave any other kind of response; the second contrasted women who thought a reason was either very important or a bit important against those who thought it was unimportant; and the third contrasted the women who nominated the reason as the most important on the list against all other women. This procedure did not force any scale on the sequence 'very important', 'a bit important' and 'not important'.

Just to dispel the notion that Aboriginal people have limited scope to make decisions that will achieve an economic benefit, the first of the factors to emerge from the analysis is clearly related to economic benefits from children. It is highly correlated with two of the reasons for wanting more children: 'Someone to help you when you're old' and 'A child can help around the house'. It has already been observed that economic participation at the microeconomic level of the household is unfettered, but the existence of an economic benefit factor in the attitudinal data does not by itself suggest that economic considerations are important in decisions about fertility. What does so is that 60 of the 81 respondents who want more children have stated that assistance in their old age is a very important reason for wanting more children, and 20 have said it is the most important of the listed reasons, while 53 of the 81 have said that assistance around the house is very important. The fact that these two reasons are strongly linked by a single factor emphasises their economic interpretation.

If Aboriginal women want children so they can have assistance in their old age then what kind of assistance is it they want? Not financial assistance: age pensions under the universal means-tested Australian system give old Aboriginal people more financial security than many have had during the whole of their earlier lifetime. Aboriginal people place emphasis, rather, on being able to live with adult children and to rely on them for non-financial assistance with daily routine tasks.

Young children contribute substantially to household work in many Aboriginal households. Cooking and cleaning are frequently done by children to an extent which observation suggests would be uncommon in non-Aboriginal households. Above all, Aboriginal children are often called on to share a large part of the task of caring for younger children.

What the interview results suggest is that these housework benefits are not merely incidental to childhood but figure in decisions about having children. On the other hand, the generalities which have been offered here by way of explanation are no more than indicative of the need for further research into the economy of Aboriginal households and the role of economic factors in decisions about fertility.

The 'economic benefits' factor appears first from the factor analysis because it accounts for more of total response variance than any other factor, but the fact that it explains more variance than the other factors is completely separate from the question of its power to account for the desire for children itself. A measure of this power has been obtained by calculating the number of women who score highly on each factor, by reference to the score of a notional respondent who is neutral on each of the input variables. Table 2 gives the number of respondents who score higher than the neutral score on each factor, disaggregated into relevant characteristics of the respondents. It can now be seen that the economic benefits factor, on which 84 per cent of respondents are positive, is in fact not quite the most important of the eight factors by this standard.

[Table 2 about here]

The most important factor was the one labelled 'identification with children', which was closely correlated with the single reason 'It is enjoyable to watch young children grow'. Only 7% of the 88 women said that this reason was unimportant to them, and more said that it was very important than in the case of any other single reason, but it attracted a smaller number saying it was the most important reason for wanting children than nominated assistance in old age. A positive score on this factor was achieved by 90 per cent of respondents. The phrase 'identification with children' encapsulates the pleasure parents derive from watching their children's growth and development, as well as their pride in their children's accomplishments. Because of the factor's universal aspect, it was hardly surprising that the disaggregation in Table 2 showed no noticeable pattern for this factor.

The third most important factor after identification with children and economic benefits is the factor labelled 'emotional benefits'. At first hearing this may seem to be related to identification with children, but the two factors are in fact quite uncorrelated on this analysis. Psychologists such as Fawcett (1977: 98-9) also carefully separate these two categories of benefit. In this case, the factor is strongly correlated with positive response to the reasons 'To have someone for you to look after' and 'To get a playmate for your children' and less strongly with a number of other reasons. The implicit emotional benefits are the happiness, love, companionship and fun in raising children, and inversely relief from loneliness and achievement of fulfilment. Aboriginal women place these benefits together with emotional benefits to existing children, recognising children's need for companionship and the perceived

enrichment to children's lives from having brothers and sisters.

While Table 2 fails to find much differentiation in the characteristics of women who have positive scores for this factor, there are some. The most interesting is the fact that a higher proportion of women who want a small family, two or three children, score positively on this factor than women who want more than three children. Thus emotional benefits from children, including emotional benefits to the mother and to existing children, are somewhat associated with desire for smaller families among the respondents. Now this goes against conventional wisdom to the extent that wanting companions for existing children has been classified elsewhere as a large family value (Fawcett, 1977: 99). The contrast here is not only one of degree, that is of what might be considered a small family in Aboriginal terms, although it is partly that. Nor is it associated with the fact that desired family size is correlated with actual parity, since positive scores on this factor show no particular association with actual parity. What is to be questioned is the convention of classifying desire for more children to be companions for existing children as just a large-family value. It can be argued that if this companionship is for the emotional benefit of the child, then, concomitantly, emotional benefits may in any case be greater in a smaller family.

The next two factors to be considered are simply identified by their strong correlations with positive response to the statements 'Because you want to have a son' and 'Because you want to have a daughter'. The interesting thing here is that these form the basis of separate factors uncorrelated with each other. It is difficult to

detect gender preference in operation here, since the number of respondents with positive scores on these two factors is not very different one from the other. What is notable is that although desire for a daughter is associated in Table 2 with young women, women with low parity, and those with no surviving daughters, desire for a son tends to be associated with somewhat higher parity, not particularly with age and not particularly with the number of surviving sons. In fact, desired family size for women who rate positively on desire for a daughter is at the low extreme for the factors shown in the table, at an average 2.7, while desire for a son is at the high extreme, at an average 3.5. This helps to explain why the factors are so clearly separable, and suggests that desire for a daughter is a small-family value, desire for a son a large-family value.

It can be speculated that a daughter represents another category of emotional benefit for women, in that a daughter is perceived as a reflection of the mother - and, in a somewhat matrifocal society, an investment in family continuity. What is clear is that women without daughters are keen to have them, while those without sons rate less positively on desire for sons.

The last factor to be considered is also one of the most interesting, first because so few women register a positive score by reference to a neutral score, and second because it accounts for a very large proportion of total response variance, some 11 per cent. Therefore it represents a very real division between a small group of respondents and the majority. The factor has been labelled 'family cohesion' because it is correlated with positive response to the reason 'To bring you and your husband closer', and also with 'To get a

playmate for your children' and 'The Aboriginal community needs more children'. Because of these associations, the factor represents the importance of children in creating or cementing social relationships and at this level it moves beyond the personal benefits to individual women. However, so few women have rated positively on this factor that it is impossible to determine any particular pattern in Table 2.

So far, it has been seen that the three important factors which can be derived from Aboriginal women's attitudes to reasons for wanting more children are, in order, the benefits derived from identification with children, economic benefits at household level, and emotional benefits to mothers and existing children. What then of the factors which can be identified among reasons that women want no more children?

The 170 women who said that they wanted no more children were given a list of reasons for wanting no more children and asked which were important to them. Again, the items were in a random order. The results were analysed in the same way as reasons for wanting more children. The numbers of women who achieved a score above neutral for each of eight identified factors, disaggregated by various characteristics, are shown in Table 3.

[Table 3 about here]

Among the factors derived from reasons for wanting more children, it has been seen that the most important found 90 per cent of respondents rating higher than a neutral score. By contrast, among the factors derived from reasons for wanting no more children, the highest percentage scoring above the neutral score is only 54 per cent. This is for the factor labelled 'costs of care' in Table 3.

The factor is closely associated with the reason 'It would cost too much to look after them'. Positive response on this factor is negatively associated with parity and even more so with preferred family size. The latter is actual parity adjusted downwards using responses to a question on how many children women would have preferred to have if they would have preferred fewer. The percentage of women who score positively on this factor decreases almost uniformly both with increasing parity and increasing preferred family size: 74 per cent of women with a preferred family size of one, 58 per cent for two, 55 per cent for three, 48 per cent for four and 49 per cent for five or more. The factor therefore represents a motivating element towards smaller completed family size and is manifestly an economic value.

Children are costly to Aboriginal parents today for virtually the same reasons that they are costly to other parents in Australia, and the costs are relatively greater because Aboriginal people are poor. Universal family allowance payments under the Australian social security system are certainly not sufficient to feed, clothe and educate children: in October 1983 they stand at \$94 per month for a woman caring for three children. There is little chance that the allowance can stretch to cover even the basic costs of caring for a child in the Australian milieu.

In the case of older children, education costs are reduced somewhat by the existence of Aboriginal Secondary Grants, benefits under which in October 1983 total \$1,093 per annum for a senior secondary student living at home and \$784 per annum for a junior secondary student. For a junior secondary student, this is made up of

\$376 for living costs, \$330 for books and clothing, all paid to the parents, and \$78 personal allowance to the student. This support may be useful, but rapidly increasing length of education for Aboriginal children during the last twenty years has certainly increased the cost of caring for children. Almost all Aboriginal children now attend secondary school at least to the minimum age of leaving school, fifteen years in most parts of Australia. The additional cost is substantial, more so in remote communities where children go away to high school, although in that case the Aboriginal Secondary Grants also meet boarding costs. I have shown (Gray, 1983) that the effect of increasing length of education on fertility is indirect and difficult to pin down when the focus is on women who have been the participants in longer education. Perhaps these are the wrong people to look at. It may not be the longer-educated whose fertility is directly affected by education, but the fertility of parents who anticipate and make allowance for the cost of longer education for their children. Caldwell (1982:301-30) has argued that just this kind of change is capable of explaining the timing of the onset of fertility decline in European populations in the nineteenth century.

Whether this single item of change in the balance of net inter-generational transfers can be sufficient to account for Aboriginal fertility decline will be explored further shortly. What can be said with certainty at this stage is more prosaic: the perceived cost of caring for children has been important in determining the point at which a majority of Aboriginal women in the study communities have stopped bearing children or would have liked to have stopped bearing children.

The second most positively affirmed factor in Table 3 is the one labelled 'maternal health', which is highly correlated with the reason 'Your health couldn't stand any more children'. Positive responses on this factor are largely determined by age, since 63 per cent of respondents over the age of thirty show a positive score compared with 29 per cent below. This factor is therefore relatively more important than the previous one for older women, but of decidedly minor importance for young women. It should also be mentioned that the reason 'Your health couldn't stand any more children' is the most frequently mentioned reason most important to women wanting no more children, emphasising that Aboriginal women over the age of thirty are substantially convinced of the health hazards of bearing children at that age. Many of these women have made an irreversible choice on this matter under medical advice, and in their case conviction may have little bearing on the matter.

Uncorrelated with this factor is another, 'age', which is also important for older women. This is largely determined by its strong correlation with the reason 'You think you are too old to have a child'. Positive scores on this factor are obtained for 17 per cent of women aged less than twenty-five, 28 per cent of women aged twenty-five to twenty-nine, 56 per cent of women in their thirties, and 76 per cent of women over the age of forty. It is even more strongly related to parity, since more than half the positive scores on this factor were for women with five or more children.

The physical demands of childrearing are represented by the factor with that label, determined largely by its correlation with the reason 'You couldn't look after too many children'. For women under

the age of thirty, this factor is the second most important after costs of care, but it is much less important for women over that age. Reflecting the fact that they already have large families, women with five children or more place less importance on this factor.

The factor 'emotional costs' is closely associated with reasons expressing the problems that arise in caring for children, especially the problems caused by children's illness.

The next factor is determined largely by strong correlations with three of the reasons for not wanting more children: 'Because there is no room', 'It would cost too much to look after them' and 'You couldn't have a job'. This is a combination of economic and opportunity costs, on one hand the limitations imposed by economic considerations on the women's ability to provide for children and on the other the restrictions imposed by children on accommodation, purse and time. While only 36 of the 170 respondents register more than a neutral score on this factor, it nevertheless accounts for 12 per cent of total response variance and is therefore highly important as a distinctive attitude pattern.

One of the remaining factors is somewhat more important than the number of positive scores indicates. This is the factor labelled 'grandmother status'. It is correlated strongly with the reason 'You shouldn't be having children because your daughter is starting her family now' and also to some extent with 'You think you are too old to have a child'. Obviously, only a minority of respondents actually have daughters of an age to begin childbearing: 56 of the 170 have daughters over the age of fourteen. Therefore the 29 respondents who have a positive score on this factor represent a majority, just, of

the population to whom the matter is at all relevant. This is not a particularly strong result, however, since it has already been seen that older women place strong emphasis on the factors 'age' and 'maternal health'.

The last factor to be discussed is genuinely unimportant, in every community, every age group and at every parity level. It is based on the reason 'The Aboriginal community has too many children', and has therefore been labelled 'societal costs'. If Aboriginal women do not rank this value highly, can it be concluded that they in fact think the Aboriginal community needs more children? The answer is an unqualified 'No'. Of the 81 women who do want more children, 59 have said that the reason 'The Aboriginal community needs more children' is not important to them, more than for any other reason on the list. It is transparently obvious that societal benefits and costs generally do not come into consideration in Aboriginal women's decisions about child-bearing in the study communities.

Fertility and Society.

The attitudes of Aboriginal women in the study communities reveal the importance of microeconomic considerations in decisions about fertility. These link in an obvious manner with the importance of the family formation process in maintaining high fertility of young Aboriginal women.

Of some importance to this argument is an assessment of the balance between economic advantages and economic costs of children, and the way in which these might have changed over time. When it is recalled that the economic advantages, as far as the surveys have

identified them, revolve around the linked issues of care in old age and prospective assistance with housework, it may be thought at first that the value of these benefits must have changed little over the years. Superficially, it is difficult to imagine what other economic benefits could have increased in value, since the economy of Australian communities, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, does not depend on things like child labour outside the household. On the costs side, however, it has been argued that the costs of caring for children have increased along with increases in educational opportunities, and that while the absolute size of these increases may not be large, they may be significant for poor households. It has been seen, too, that Aboriginal women who give importance to the costs of caring for children, as a reason for having no more, tend to have had smaller families than others.

The issue is not clearcut, and it would be difficult to argue on this basis alone that the balance between economic costs and benefits of children has shifted more than a few degrees for Aboriginal women. A more historical perspective, however, yields up a little more substance to the argument.

The balance between costs and benefits of children must certainly have looked different until a decade ago. During the 1970s, it was still common in Aboriginal communities that were undergoing the education transition, when the first generation of secondary-educated children was finishing school, for residents of those communities to have very high expectations of what these children could achieve as a result of educational attainment. I visited several of these communities in the late 1970s, and at the time it was obvious that the

bits of paper that the children were bringing home would confer little advantage at all where there were no jobs to be had - despite extremely high expectations of their parents. Expectations of education had soured in the communities where the surveys reported here were carried out. 'They go straight from school onto the bottle.' The disillusionment, however, was recent. A decade ago, it would have seemed that the costs of longer education were worthwhile for purposes of future economic advantage and so limiting fertility to meet these new costs was economically rational. Although expectations became more realistic, it remained economically rational: the only children who did get good jobs also had good education.

This should be considered in three ways. The first is from the perspective that care in their old age is a very important benefit that Aboriginal women who want more children hope to gain, and the quality of this care can be expected to depend upon the future economic status of their children. The second is that the other economic benefit, assistance with housework, is eroded by longer education of children and this erosion is reinforced by lower demand for this assistance in households with smaller numbers of children.

The third is that recognition of the costs of caring for children, substantially affected by education costs, is associated with low parity among those women who want no more children. Thus the economic advantages of having children or having no more children actually link together to promote small family size. It is this linkage which is convincing in arguing that the balance between economic costs and benefits of children shifted in favour of small family size and provided the pretext for the acceptance of family

planning services through concurrently-expanding health services.

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Table 1.
Fertility of Aboriginal Women,
1956-61 to 1976-81. (a)

	1956-61	1961-66	1966-71	1971-76	1976-81
Age specific birth rates(b)					
15-19	163	155	148	145	145
20-24	319	313	300	263	239
25-29	278	295	285	232	170
30-34	196	201	223	142	85
35-39	138	143	148	16	14
40-44	55	56	55	13	9
45-49	27	28	28	3	4
Total fertility rates(c)					
Major urban(d)	4.87	4.59	4.26	4.19	2.30
Other urban	6.51	6.56	6.43	3.79	3.72
Rural	5.79	6.05	6.38	4.33	3.53
Total	5.88	5.94	5.94	4.07	3.32

- (a) Estimates based on intercensal comparison of stated parity.
 (b) Rates per thousand women in each age group.
 (c) The number of children that a woman would bear if she experienced each of the age specific rates for the geographical area in the reference period. (Age specific rates are not shown for the separate entities.)
 (d) Cities of 100,000 population or more.

Source: Estimates derived from unpublished data, Australian Censuses 1966 to 1981, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics and Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Table 2.
Factor Analysis of Reasons for Wanting More Children.
Positive Scores (a) on Factors by Various Characteristics of Women.

		N	Economic benefits	Family cohesion	Emotional benefits	Desire for daughter	Identification with children	Desire for son
Total		81	68	16	66	35	73	31
Age:	Less than 20	19	17	5	17	13	14	7
	20-24	34	30	4	27	14	33	11
	25-29	14	9	5	10	6	14	8
	30-39	10	8	0	8	0	8	4
	40 and over	4	4	2	4	2	4	1
Parity:	0	5	5	4	5	2	5	1
	1	34	26	4	28	20	29	10
	2	18	17	2	16	4	18	4
	3	13	11	3	8	6	12	8
	4	4	3	1	2	0	4	3
	5 or more	7	6	2	7	3	5	5
Surviving sons:	0	26	21	8	21	11	24	7
	1	39	34	5	35	17	35	18
	2 or more	16	13	3	10	7	14	6
Surviving daughters:	0	31	27	5	25	19	28	9
	1	32	25	6	25	11	29	9
	2 or more	18	16	5	15	5	16	13
Desired family size:	2	11	10	2	11	6	9	4
	3	13	10	4	12	8	12	6
	4	25	22	4	17	9	24	6
	5 or more	32	26	6	26	12	28	15
	Mean		3.0	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.9	3.5

(a) Number of respondents who register more than a neutral score on each factor.

Table 3.
Factor Analysis of Reasons for Wanting No More Children.
Positive Scores on Factors (a) by Various Characteristics of Women.

		N	Economic + Grandmother opportunity costs	status	Maternal health	Emotional costs	Physical demands	Societal costs	Age	Costs of care
Total		170	38	29	81	77	77	29	77	91
Age:	Less than 20	11	2	1	4	3	5	4	1	6
	20-24	31	10	2	11	16	16	5	6	19
	25-29	36	6	2	8	13	15	3	10	18
	30-34	50	12	11	30	19	25	10	28	26
	40 and over	42	8	13	28	20	16	7	32	22
Parity:	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
	1	16	2	3	6	4	7	5	4	11
	2	27	8	2	12	15	15	5	9	16
	3	27	5	3	11	11	13	3	7	15
	4	23	9	3	11	8	13	5	12	12
	5 or more	76	14	18	40	33	29	11	44	37
Surviving sons:	0	20	3	3	8	8	9	5	8	12
	1	43	10	6	20	18	24	8	15	26
	2 or more	107	25	20	53	45	44	16	54	53
Surviving daughters:	0	25	6	2	12	10	14	4	7	15
	1	49	10	7	20	22	24	10	19	27
	2 or more	96	22	20	49	39	39	15	51	49
Preferred family size:	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
(b)	1	19	2	4	7	7	9	6	6	14
	2	26	8	2	12	14	15	5	8	15
	3	29	6	3	11	11	15	3	8	16
	4	21	9	3	11	7	11	4	10	10
	5 or more	74	13	17	39	32	27	11	44	36
	Mean		4.7	5.1	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.4	5.0	4.5

(a) Number of respondents who register more than a neutral score on each factor.

(b) Parity adjusted downwards if women would have preferred to have fewer children.

Family formation and ethnicity

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In 1981, 21.8 per cent of the population in Australia were born overseas, compared to 10 per cent in 1947. Since the end of the Second World War, the immigration of people from Eastern Europe, then Northern and Southern Europe, the Middle East and more recently from Southeast Asia, in addition to that of people from other English speaking countries, has made Australia 'a nation of migrants' (Drury, 1976, as quoted in Rowland, 1982). The history of this immigration program and its consequences on the ethnic composition of the population have been well documented (see Price, 1983, and Rowland, 1982, for recent reviews).

With the increase in 'multiculturalism' in Australia, there has been increasing interest in the demography of the various ethnic groups. Over the years, there have been studies of the fertility patterns of the immigrant groups compared with that of the native-born (Ware, 1975), of motivations for childbearing among Greeks and Italians (Callan, 1980), and differences in demographic trends according to birthplace (Price, 1981). Some of the social and demographic trends of migrant groups have been reviewed by Storer (1981). Other studies of the demography of the Australian population have often included comparisons of the Australian-born with the foreign-born - on marriage patterns (McDonald, 1974; 1982), premarital pregnancies (Ruzicka, 1977), fertility trends (Ruzicka and Cadwell, 1977; National Population Inquiry, 1978), and childbearing patterns (Young, 1977).

This paper presents some preliminary findings on family formation patterns and attitudes of men and women of different ethnic groups in Australia. Based on data collected in a nation-wide survey on family formation by the Institute of Family Studies, the study compares the

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foreign-born, grouped according to their region of origin, with the Australian-born population on their marriage and childbearing patterns, attitudes and decision-making on these issues.

THE DATA

Data for the study came from an Australia-wide survey conducted by the Institute of Family Studies between December 1981 and February 1982. The survey sample was restricted to men and women aged 18-34. The questionnaire covered such issues as family background, educational and occupational history, personal relationships, family formation plans and behaviour, and attitudes to marriage and the family.

The respondents were selected on a probability sample design and came from randomly chosen households in 650 Collectors' Districts (C.D.) scattered throughout Australia. Approximately 15 households were contacted in each C.D. to yield 4 completed interviews. At each house whoever answered the door was asked for details about the people living there and their relationships to one another. Then, in households where there was at least one person aged between 18 and 34 years, a detailed interview was obtained with one person in that age range. A total of 2,544 interviews were obtained from 1,118 men and 1,426 women.

SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS

The study takes a broad definition of ethnicity because of sample size limitations, grouping the foreign-born according to the region rather than the specific country from where they came. It is also exploratory, its objective mainly to examine the survey data on family formation for any important differences among the various ethnic groups.

Of the 2,544 men and women interviewed in the survey, 565 (22.2 per cent) were foreign-born. The distribution of the survey respondents

by birthplace and sex is shown in Table 1. The number of respondents from specific countries, aside from Britain and Ireland, was small. Since the study would examine men and women separately and at times would need to control for such characteristics as age and marital status, a regrouping of the foreign-born by region of origin based on similar ethnic backgrounds rather than by country of birth was considered necessary in order to obtain adequate numbers of cases for analysis.

Respondents from the English speaking countries (U.K., Ireland, New Zealand, U.S.A. and Canada) were grouped together for the study. Although there were linguistic and cultural differences between the western and eastern Europeans, their small numbers also made it necessary to put them in one category. The third group consisted of all Southern European and Middle Eastern countries, forming a 'Mediterranean' bloc. Men and women from Southeast Asia and China formed the fourth group. The last group comprised all the other foreign-born, a residual category consisting of the few persons born in Africa, South America, South Asia and the Pacific Islands. The distribution of the sample according to these new categories is shown in Table 2.

The use of weights to make the survey sample representative of the Australian population in terms of its sex ratio, marital status distribution, and labour force participation rates resulted in some distortion of the numbers in the smaller ethnic groups. Therefore, it was decided that the unweighted sample would be used. The findings should be interpreted as reflecting the respondents' rather than the Australian population's views and behaviour.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The respondents were all aged between 18 and 34 years. Half of the men and one-third of the women were still single, although there were variations among the ethnic categories. A greater proportion of the Australian-born was single. The highest proportion currently married was among respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East. Very few men and women from this ethnic category as well as from Southeast Asia and China were in defacto relationships, separated or divorced compared with the Australian-born and those from English speaking countries. (Table 3).

Most of the foreign-born lived in metropolitan areas. Those from English speaking countries were disproportionately found in Western Australia, the European males were disproportionately found in South Australia, and 80 per cent of the respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East were in New South Wales and Victoria.

There was little difference in the distribution by educational level between the Australian-born and respondents from other English speaking countries and most of Europe. Those from Southern Europe and the Middle East had a slightly lower level of education on average. Respondents from Southeast Asia were more highly educated; some of them were probably students enrolled in tertiary educational institutions and might not be permanent migrants.

Among the men, the Australian-born had the highest proportion working and the lowest proportion studying; the Southeast Asians had the lowest proportion working and the highest proportion of students. Among women, about one-third in all ethnic categories except 'elsewhere' were working full time; two-thirds of those from 'elsewhere' were in full time employment. Women from Southern Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia

and 'elsewhere' were less likely than the others to work part time. About 40 per cent in all ethnic categories were involved in home duties (except those from the 'elsewhere' category). A higher proportion of the foreign-born from non-English speaking countries were unskilled workers.

About 27 per cent of the Australian-born were Catholics, more than half were other types of Christians and 21 per cent of the males and 12 per cent of the females reported no religion. The proportion of Catholics was highest among respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East and lowest among those from other English speaking countries. Between 24 and 30 per cent of the foreign-born, except those from Southern Europe, the Middle East and 'elsewhere', had no religion, compared with 16 per cent of the Australian-born.

A measure of religiosity was derived from the question about attendance at religious services. About 50 per cent of the Australian-born respondents could be classified as practising a religion. The highest proportion practising was from Southern Europe and the Middle East and 'elsewhere'. Less than half of the respondents from English speaking countries were practising a religion.

Among the foreign-born, 87 per cent of the Italians came to Australia before the age of 15, compared with 52 per cent of English speaking respondents and 41 per cent of the Middle Eastern men and women. Three-quarters of the Southeast Asians came after age 15. These patterns reflect the ethnic component of different migration waves since the Second World War (Price, 1982).

MARRIAGE

In McDonald's study of marriage patterns, he examined the question of whether immigrants maintained the marriage behaviour of their former country or adapted to the Australian behaviour, and found that 'no matter what the pattern at arrival or in the country of origin, all immigrant groups moved towards the pattern for the Australian-born' (McDonald, 1982:191). For example, Greeks in Australia married at younger ages than those in Greece, where the age at marriage was higher than in Australia.

A recent analysis of marital status by birthplace based on 1971 and 1976 census data by Price (1981) showed that a higher proportion of migrants over age 25 were married compared with the Australian-born. However, the proportions separated or divorced were lower among migrants, especially those from Southern Europe, than the Australian-born population.

The following discussion provides an update on patterns of marriage among the various ethnic groups. It also examines marital stability among these groups, and attitudes toward the choice of partner and timing of marriage.

Proportions married by birthplace

Data from the 1981 census on marital status by age provide a better comparison of marriage patterns among the ethnic groups than can be obtained from the Family Formation Survey. Table 4 shows the proportions ever married among men and women aged 20-34 years, the population covered by the Family Formation Survey.

Compared with the Australian-born, a higher proportion of the foreign-born in their twenties had been married. Over 25 per cent of European men aged 20-24 had been married compared with 22 per cent of Australian-born men. The highest proportions married in that age group were those born in the Netherlands, Southern Europe and the Middle East; about 30 per cent had been married. A higher proportion of them were also married in the 30-34 age group. The pattern among the women was similar. Over 70 per cent of

Yugoslav women aged 20-24 and 64 per cent of women from Greece and other Southern European countries had been married compared with 44 per cent of Australian-born women.

Lower proportions of those from most Asian countries, Africa and the Pacific Islands were married compared with Australians. Only 12 per cent of men aged 20-24 from southeast Asia (excluding Indo-China) and 37 per cent of the women had been married. Less than 20 per cent of men in the same age group from Africa, South Asia, and the Pacific Islands, New Zealand and North America had been married. Some of these people could be tertiary students and therefore could be selected for later marriage. There was no difference in the proportions married among the Indo-Chinese and the Australian-born in the 20-24 age group, although the proportions married at ages 25 and above were lower than among the Australian-born.

Although the sample size was small, it was possible to compare the median age at first marriage of men and women aged 28-34 interviewed in the Family Formation Survey. Among the Australian-born, the median age at first marriage was 24.6 years for men and 21.6 years for women. The European-born male respondents in this age group had a slightly higher median age at first marriage than Australian-born males, but European-born female respondents married at younger ages than Australian-born women. The Asian-born respondents, both males and females, had the highest median age at marriage: 28 years for men and 24 years for women. (Table 5).

Marital stability

Although Southern European men and women married earlier than those from other ethnic categories, their marriages were more stable. Data from the Family Formation Survey indicated that 96 per cent of Southern European and Middle Eastern men and 95 per cent of women aged 18-34 who had been married were still in their first marriage. By comparison, 86 per cent of Australian-born men and 81 per cent of Australian-born women who had been married were still in their first marriage, and the proportion was even lower among men and women from other English speaking countries (Table 6).

A strong family tradition and the role of religion in their lives (this ethnic category had the highest proportion practising a religion) probably helped to explain the relatively high level of marital stability among the Southern Europeans and Middle East respondents. Other factors might be related to their choice of partners, reasons for marriage and attitudes to marriage and the family, to be discussed in following sections.

Choice of partner

Questions were asked in the Family Formation Survey about where respondents met or expected to meet their partner, what qualities they considered important about partners and their parents' influence on their selection of partners.

About one-quarter of all the respondents met their partners at some form of recreation activity, such as dances or sporting events, during holidays or at the beach and many of those who intended to marry indicated that they expected to meet their partner at these same places. Friends were also an important source through which many met or expected to meet their partners.

Southern European and Middle Eastern men and

women were more likely to meet their partners through parents, relatives and friends than respondents in the other ethnic categories. One-third of the Southeast Asian males met or expected to meet their partners at school or university, and 3 out of the 11 females without partners also expected to meet their partners at these places. However, those with partners met them through parents and friends and at recreation places. (Table 7)

Marriage with another person from the same region of origin was also more common among some ethnic categories than others (see Price, 1981). Table 8 shows the proportions of men and women having a partner of the same ethnic category and proportions with an Australian-born partner. Four out of the five Southeast Asian and Chinese male respondents had a partner from the same ethnic category. As mentioned earlier, this category had the highest proportion who came to Australia after the age of 15 and the men were probably married before their arrival in this country. About half of the male respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East and the English speaking countries had partners born in the same region as themselves, but only a quarter of those born in the rest of Europe did. More than half of the women from Southern Europe and the Middle East had a partner in the same ethnic category, while only one-third of those from the rest of Europe and 'elsewhere' did. These patterns were similar to those found by Price (1981) based on registration data in the 1970s.

A higher proportion of foreign-born men than foreign-born women had an Australian-born partner, except the Southeast Asian and Chinese respondents. Nearly two-thirds of men from most European countries had an Australian-born partner, compared with 29 per cent of the Southern European and Middle East men and 20 per cent of Southeast Asian men. The difference in the proportions of women of the various

ethnic categories with an Australian-born partner was smaller. The lowest proportion with an Australian-born partner came from the Southern European/Middle East category (26 per cent).

In discussing partner's attributes, most men and women in all ethnic categories considered it important that their partners should have similar goals and ideas as themselves, and 'a great personality'. Most men also liked their partner to be 'attractive', although only half the women thought this quality to be important. The importance of education among the Southeast Asian and Chinese was also evident in their choice of partners. Two-thirds of the respondents in this ethnic category but less than half of the others thought it was important that partners should have similar educational qualifications. (Table 9).

About one-third of the men and women in most ethnic categories considered that a similar ethnic background was important. Among men, those born in Southern Europe and the Middle East were more likely to consider this characteristic important, and among women those from Southeast Asia and China were more likely to consider this important. Both men and women in these two categories, more so than those in the other, also thought that their parents would object to their marrying someone of a different race. Fathers supposedly must have a more liberal view than mothers on this subject as fewer respondents thought their fathers would object compared with their mothers.

Having similar religious beliefs was considered to be important by a greater proportion of respondents than having similar ethnic background. 51 per cent of all men and 60 per cent of women born in Southern Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and China considered this characteristic in a partner to be important. As expected, even more people in these

two categories thought that their parents would object if they were to marry someone of a different religion than if they were to marry someone of a different ethnic background. However, English speaking respondents thought that their parents would be more likely to object to their marrying someone of a different race than of a different religion. It will be recalled that the proportion practising a religion was highest among the Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents and lowest among the English-speaking respondents.

Most of those with a partner said that their parents approved of their partner. This approval was more important to women than to men and also more so among both men and women from Southern Europe and the Middle East. It was therefore not surprising that only 65 per cent of these men and 57 per cent of the women would choose to marry their partners if their parents did not approve, and 13-14 per cent would not know what to do. The Southeast Asians and Chinese respondents were also as likely not to go against their parents' wishes. These two groups of respondents differed from the others, and especially the English speaking respondents, most of whom indicated that they would marry their partner even if their parents disapproved.

The proper time to marry

It has been suggested that there has been a strong return recently to the nineteenth century ethic of 'the proper time to marry' (McDonald, 1982:190):

Today the economical y 'proper time' is when the couple have sufficient savings to begin marriage 'in a substantial, well-furnished house' while the psychologically 'proper time' is when one's 'personality is fully developed' through travel, career and freedom of relationship with a broad range of people.

Evidence of an economically and psychologically proper time to marry, although their definition might be somewhat different from that

specified above, was strongest among the Southeast Asians and Chinese, than the Southern European and Middle East respondents, and less so among the other Europeans. Among the unmarried respondents, nearly all the Southeast Asian and Chinese men and more than three-quarters of the women felt that they would like to be more mature and financially secure before they married. Financial security was also important to many respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East, and to Australian-born men. Overall, men were more concerned about financial security than women who were more likely to agree that 'marriage will happen when it happens'. Many respondents from Southeast Asia and China also said that they would like to finish their education before getting married.

Few of the unmarried men and women felt any pressure to marry, whether from parents, relatives or friends. The exceptions were the Southeast Asians and Chinese, about 20 per cent (5 out of 24) of whom felt some pressure, mainly from parents, to marry earlier than they would like.

The ultimate question, 'Why marry?' brought forth further indications of the concept of 'the proper time to marry'. Love, of course, was the most frequently mentioned reason for marriage. However, a small but significant proportion of men (17 per cent) and women (11 per cent) also said that getting married was the 'next step' or the 'right step' in life for them, and similar proportions felt that it was time to have a family, a home and a future together with their partner. They got married because they had arrived at the proper time to marry.

Attitudes

Knowledge of how people of different ethnic groups perceive marriage and what they expect from the marriage relationship helps to understand some of the statistics for marriage and divorce indicated for these groups. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about specific advantages and disadvantages of marriage. (Table 10).

Southern European and Middle East men and women were consistently more likely to agree with statements about the positive aspects of marriage and to recognise its responsibilities and limitations. That ethnic category had the highest proportion agreeing that marriage provided love, warmth and happiness, a regular sex life and the opportunity to have and bring up children, and that marriage also developed a sense of responsibility. A higher proportion in this ethnic category compared with the others also agreed that marriage gave economic security. Half of the men, but only one-third of those from English speaking origin, agreed that one sacrificed independence and personal freedom when one married. This ethnic category also had the highest proportion (94 per cent of men and 78 per cent of women) agreeing that 'marriage is for life'.

The Southeast Asians and Chinese also came close to the Southern Europeans and Middle East respondents in their attitude to marriage. By comparison with these two groups, men and women from the English speaking countries were more cynical about marriage, with more than half agreeing that people took one another for granted after marriage, and two-thirds agreeing that 'marriage is for life'.

It is difficult to say whether it was the attitude of these people which determined their marital status patterns as shown in Table 6

or that their marital status pattern influenced their attitude. Did the Southern European and Middle East respondents feel more positive about marriage because most of them had stable marriages, or did their attitude contribute to the stability of their marriages? It was not possible to conclude from the data available, but the answer to both questions might be affirmative.

CHILDBEARING

Fertility differences among the ethnic groups had been indicated in many previous studies of childbearing patterns in Australia (see Ware, 1975; Young, 1977; Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1977; 1982). A comparison of completed family size by birthplace of women over the age of 40 in 1966 and 1971 showed that Australian-born wives had slightly larger families than all foreign-born wives (Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1982:221). The study also showed that women born in the United Kingdom had similar fertility to Australian-born women. German-born wives had the smallest families with the largest proportion childless or having one child, while the Maltese and the Dutch had higher fertility than Australian-born women. Examination of the fertility of more recent birth cohorts led Ruzicka and Caldwell (1982:221) to conclude that:

There appears to be emerging now, even among the younger generations of immigrants with high fertility tradition, a trend toward smaller families and thus greater homogeneity in family structures more in conformity with the prevailing Australian pattern.

Data from the Family Formation Survey allow us to examine this question by comparing the fertility patterns and intentions of wives aged 18-34, the youngest generation, and still in their family building years. The survey also collected additional information on when respondents regarded as 'the proper time to have children' and reasons

for having children, thus providing an insight into some of the factors underlying the observed fertility pattern.

Fertility and desired family size

Among ever married women under age 30, 85 per cent of those from Southeast Asia and China and 80 per cent of those from Southern Europe and the Middle East had had at least one child, compared with 69 per cent of Australian-born women. A previous study had found that Greek and Italian women preferred to have the first child in the initial years of marriage, while Australian-born women were less keen to do so (Callan, 1980:14). Most of the women in the age group 30-34 had had at least one child; there was not much difference among the various ethnic categories.

The Southeast Asian and Chinese women under age 30 had an average of 1.86 children, the Southern European and Middle East women had an average of 1.33 and the Australian-born women averaged 1.28 births. Women from the other English speaking countries also had higher fertility than the Australian-born. Only those from the rest of Europe and the 'elsewhere' category had lower average fertility. (Table 11)

Among married women aged 30-34 years, the pattern was a little different. Most of the European women had higher fertility than Australian-born women, but the Southern European, the Middle East women and the Southeast Asians had lower fertility. These patterns suggested that although the Southern Europeans and the Southeast Asians might be more likely to have children in the early years of marriage, their family size at later ages might still be smaller than that of the Australian-born.

A comparison of desired family size indeed shows that Australian-

born wives expected to have larger families than foreign-born wives. Forty-seven per cent wanted 3 or more children, compared with 43 per cent or less among the foreign-born. Married women from Southeast Asia were most homogeneous in their family size expectations: two-thirds wanted to have 2 children and only 11 per cent wanted 3 or more. One-child families were not popular with the Southern European, Middle East, English speaking, 'elsewhere' and Australian-born respondents. However, about 1 in 5 women from the rest of Europe and Southeast Asia wanted to have only one child. (Table 12). On average, the Australian-born wives wanted 2.5 children, the Southeast Asians wanted 1.9, and the other ethnic categories fell in between.

There was little difference in desired family size between married women under age 30 and those aged 30-34, except the western and eastern European women amongst whom the younger cohort wanted an average of 1.6 children compared with 2.5 by the older cohort. There was no consistent pattern by educational level across the various ethnic categories. Among wives born in Australia and other English speaking countries, the more educated expected a slightly smaller family size, but the reverse pattern was indicated among Southern European, Middle East and Asian wives. Most working wives wanted smaller families; the Asians were the exception. Those who were working wanted 2.3 children; the non-working wanted only 1.6. (Table 13)

Catholics in the various ethnic categories differed in their desired family size. Australian-born Catholics wanted the most number of children, an average of 2.8, while the Southern European Catholics wanted 2.5 and those from other European countries wanted 2.1. Earlier studies of fertility also found Australian-born Catholics to be the most pronatalist (Ware, 1975; Callan 1980). It had been suggested that the foreign-born Catholics were less attached than the native-born to the Australian

Catholic system of values (Day, 1964 as quoted in Callan, 1980:32) and that the Australian Catholic education system was a strong reinforcer of the Church's traditional teachings (Callan, 1980:32). The practice of a religion was also associated with higher expected fertility in all the ethnic categories.

Length of residence in Australia did not affect desired family size in the same way in all the ethnic categories. While most foreign-born wives who came to Australia after the age of 15 wanted slightly smaller families, the reverse was observed among wives from Southern Europe and the Middle East.

Having children: preferences, pressures and reasons

Callan's study of the value and costs of children to Australian, Greek and Italian parents in Sydney was one of the few that sought to examine childbearing decision-making among immigrant groups in Australia. (Callan, 1980). He found differences in the social importance of having children and preferences in the timing and sex of children between the immigrant groups and the native-born.

Although Callan's study found a slight preference for sons among the Greek and Australian-born men, data from the Family Formation Survey showed a slight son preference only among Australian-born men but not among the Greeks. In fact, no male respondent in the Southern European/Middle East category wanted just boys; about 60 per cent of those with a partner wanted children of both sexes and 33 per cent would not mind having either boys or girls.

About half of men and women in all the ethnic categories wanted children of both sexes and about one-third would not mind having either boys or girls. The data suggest that the Australian-born and the

respondents from other English speaking countries had more specific preferences about the sex of their children. Relatively more respondents in these categories expressed a preference for just boys or just girls or both sexes than respondents in other categories. The European-born (except Southern Europeans) were least likely to mind whether they had boys or girls. Women from Asia, Southern Europe and the Middle East were also less likely than men from the same regions to mind having children of either sex.

About one-third of male respondents currently with a partner said that they felt some pressure from their parents, their partners and themselves to have children. Men from Southern Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia were more likely to feel such pressure from their partners. Three out of the 5 men from Southeast Asia felt some pressure from their parents. A lower proportion of women said they felt any pressure from their parents or partner to have children, probably because more of them already had children compared with the men in this age group. About one-third of women, however, said they felt some pressure from themselves to have children. This pressure could come from their awareness that they were currently in their prime reproductive years and that it was less desirable to have children once they were over the age of 35. (Table 14)

Many men felt it was important to delay childbearing until they and their partners could cope with the additional responsibilities, their marriage had settled and that they had enough money. Women who were born in Australia and other English speaking countries were more ready to delay having children than those from non English speaking countries, particularly Southern Europe and the Middle East and Southeast Asia. (Table 15). In his study of Greek and Italian parents, Callan (1980:14) also found that the Southern European wives were more likely to want to have a child in the initial years of marriage than Australian wives. Thus,

even though more Southern European and Middle East male respondents compared to the Australian-born indicated that they would delay having children for several of the reasons suggested, it is possible that they did not because their partners were 'ready to cope'.

Respondents in the various ethnic categories differed from one another in the reasons for having children. Callan (1980:14) reported that there was 'immense social importance in having a child in the Southern European community'. Having children was perceived as a fulfilment of the marriage and established the couple in the community. Such sentiments were also indicated in the Family Formation Survey data. Southern European and Middle East respondents felt that having children was an important part of marriage and there were frequent expressions of a liking for children - 'kids make life more fun'. Few respondents in this ethnic category mentioned that having children affected their social life or the family finances, or resulted in the loss of freedom; none regarded children as 'demanding'. When asked to list some of the bad effects of having children, the Southern European and Middle East respondents were more likely to mention worries they had about their children's well being and future. (Table 16).

Other Europeans also appeared to enjoy children. Many men mentioned pride in creating their own family and the process of childrearing. The English speaking respondents were more likely to perceive having children as a natural stage of the life cycle although many also enjoyed watching their children grow up and teaching them. However, unlike the the Southern Europeans, they were more likely to note that children were demanding in several respects, that they affected their parents' social life and finances and meant many sleepless nights and some loss of freedom.

There were only 4 male respondents from Southeast Asia and China with children, thus making it difficult to form any reliable conclusions

about their perceptions on having children. Among the women, many regarded having children as part of marriage and the natural sequence of life cycle events. Nonetheless, many thought that children made life enjoyable and made them more responsible. Like the Southern European and Middle East women, they considered the worries about their children's well being and future as one of the bad effects of having children, rather than the demands of the children on themselves.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The foreign-born population, coming from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, differed in some ways from one another and from the Australian-born population in their marriage and childbearing patterns, and in their attitudes to family formation. It is somewhat expected that those from Southern Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia would be more likely than others from English-speaking countries or Western Europe to differ from native-born Australians in their family formation patterns since these people came from societies with social and religious traditions that were quite different from that of the English speaking people that formed the majority of the Australian population.

Separation and divorce were most uncommon among the Southern European and Middle East men and women interviewed in the Family Formation Survey. These respondents were also the most likely to agree that marriage provided love, warmth and happiness, a sense of responsibility, and the opportunity to have and bring up children. Many felt it was important to them that their parents approved of their partner; not surprisingly many had partners of the same ethnic background and met their partners through parents, relatives and friends.

The family was regarded as an important social institution. Children

were much valued and considered an important part of marriage. Although the Southern European and Middle East women under age 30 were more likely to have married and have children than Australian-born women of the same age, they intended to have slightly smaller families. Ware (1975:376) had suggested that differences in fertility behaviour between the Southern Europeans and native-born Australians could be explained by differences in socioeconomic status. That hypothesis remains to be tested through further analysis of the data. The preliminary findings indicated that in spite of the social importance of having children among the Southern European/Middle East respondents, their concern for their children's future could be a strong motivating factor in their wanting a small family. It had been suggested that as migrants they were likely to be more achievement oriented than native-born Australians (Ware, 1975:377). Many of them probably wanted their children to be successful in their new country and the best way was to give a few children the best upbringing they could afford. An earlier study had shown that Greek women would like at least a son to attend university (Callan, 1980:33).

The other ethnic group to show important differences in family formation patterns from the Australian-born was the Southeast Asians and persons of Chinese background. They married much later and on average wanted the smallest family. Two-thirds of the married women wanted 2 children; only 1 in 10 wanted to have 3 or more. They also appeared achievement oriented and many had tertiary education. This factor could be related to their later age at marriage and lower fertility. But even those who did not have tertiary education wanted small families. Like the Southern European/Middle East respondents, many Asian respondents felt that parents' approval of their partner was important and many had partners of the same

ethnic background. However, more of them came to Australia after the age of 15 and therefore many could have been married before their arrival in this country. Religion was less important to them than to the Southern European and Middle East men and women.

Men and women born in other English-speaking countries were similar to the Australian-born in their attitudes to marriage and childbearing. However, they were married at slightly younger ages than the Australian-born and the incidence of marital breakdown also appeared to be higher among them. Married women began childbearing earlier than Australian-born women but wanted slightly smaller families.

The other Europeans were closer to the English speaking and Australian-born respondents in their attitudes to marriage and childbearing and their marriage patterns than they were to the Southern Europeans. However, male respondents in this group were more likely to have an Australian-born partner than males in the other foreign-born categories. The married female respondents also wanted smaller families than the Australian-born and other English speaking respondents; 4 out of the 20 wanted or expected to have one child only.

It is possible that the combination of people from so many national origins into a European category cause other distinguishable differences between a particular people and native-born Australians to balance out. For example, data from earlier censuses had indicated that German-born wives had lower fertility than Australian-born women, but that the Dutch had higher fertility (Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1982). The combination of these two groups into a European category would result in that category having similar fertility as the Australian-born. However, their small numbers made such a regrouping necessary. It would also have been

preferable to consider Eastern Europeans separately since many came as refugees and their family formation pattern might be different from that of the Western Europeans.

It is difficult to form any conclusions about the 'elsewhere' category because it consisted of very small numbers of very diverse people. Collectively, they formed only 1.7 per cent of the Australian population in 1981. Thus, it would be difficult to include many of them in any survey.

Although this discussion has highlighted the differences in family formation behaviour and attitudes among men and women of different ethnic background, it is equally important to note similarities of which there were perhaps even more. For example, the most recent census data showed that the proportions of men and women aged 20-24 who had married were the same for those born in Indo-China as for the Australian-born. Men and women of different ethnic backgrounds were also in agreement about partner's attributes they considered important, such as having similar goals and ideas.

Only the Southern European/Middle East respondents stood out in the stability of their marriages. The Southeast Asians and other Europeans were similar to the Australian-born and English speaking respondents in some of their notions about the advantages and disadvantages of marriage, and probably experienced comparable rates of marital dissolution. Further analyses of larger samples would be necessary to establish this.

Young women from all ethnic backgrounds living in Australia were also similar to one another in wanting small families. The two-child family appeared to be the norm for women in all the ethnic categories. About half of all European and English speaking respondents and two-thirds of the Asians and others wanted to have 2 children. The average desired family size of the Australian-born women was 2.5 compared with 2.4 of the Southern European and Middle East women and 2.2 of other European-born

women. The Asians, coming from a tradition of high fertility, wanted an even smaller family of not more than 2 children.

These findings indicate that ethnic groups living in Australia have retained some of the social and religious values of the societies from which they came and which have influenced aspects of their marriage patterns, but they have also adapted in a pragmatic way, in their fertility behaviour, to life in this country. Additional studies which follow up these respondents and their demographic behaviour in their later childbearing years, and comparisons with Australian-born persons of the same ethnic background whose parents were migrants, would provide further understanding of the family formation and dissolution patterns of different ethnic groups and of the kind of services that could be provided to assist migrant families.

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Table 1. Distribution of the respondents according to birthplace groups in the survey questionnaire.

Birthplace	Males	Females	Total	
			Number	Percent
1. Australia	857	1,122	1,979	77.8
2. New Zealand	28	23	51	2.0
3. Pacific Islands	5	7	12	0.5
4. United Kingdom, Ireland	95	120	215	8.5
5. Germany	10	14	24	0.9
6. Netherlands	7	7	14	0.6
7. Other Western Europe	7	3	10	0.4
8. Greece	10	10	20	0.8
9. Italy	16	23	39	1.5
10. Yugoslavia	11	7	18	0.7
11. Other Southern Europe	13	7	20	0.8
12. Eastern Europe	8	5	13	0.5
13. Middle East	14	13	27	1.1
14. Africa	5	14	19	0.7
15. South Asia	7	7	14	0.6
16. Southeast Asia, China	18	29	47	1.8
17. U.S.A., Canada	4	9	13	0.5
18. South America	3	6	9	0.4
Total	1,118	1,426	2,544	100.0

Table 2. Distribution of the respondents according to the birthplace categories used in this study.

Birthplace category	Males	Females	Total	
			Number	Percent
Australia (1)	857	1,122	1,979	77.8
Other English-speaking countries (2,4,17)	127	152	279	11.0
Western and Eastern Europe (5,6,7,12)	32	29	61	2.4
Southern Europe and Middle East (8,9,10,11,13)	64	60	124	4.9
Southeast Asia, China (16)	18	29	47	1.8
Elsewhere (3,14,15,18)	20	34	54	2.1
Total	1,118	1,426	2,544	100.0

Note: The numbers in parentheses refer to the birthplace number in Table 1.

Table 3. Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the sample according to birthplace groupings.

Characteristics	Birthplace					
	Australia	Other Eng.- sp. countr.	W. & E. Europe	S. Europe Mid-East	SE Asia China	Else- where
MALES	Per cent distribution					
<u>Age (years):</u>						
18-22	37.1	31.5	25.0	20.3	27.8	40.0
23-27	29.6	29.1	25.0	23.4	38.9	45.0
28-34	33.3	39.4	50.5	56.3	33.3	15.0
<u>Marital status:</u>						
Single	52.2	41.7	43.8	32.8	66.7	70.0
Married	38.7	44.9	43.8	64.1	27.8	25.0
Defacto	6.7	9.4	9.4	1.6	0	0
Separated	0.8	1.6	0	1.6	5.6	8.3
Divorced	1.5	2.4	3.1	0	0	0
Widowed	0.1	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Type of locality:</u>						
Metropolitan	67.8	83.5	81.3	84.4	100.0	85.0
Non-metropolitan	32.2	16.5	18.7	15.6	0	15.0
<u>State:</u>						
New South Wales	37.5	29.9	28.1	45.3	38.9	60.0
Victoria	23.6	17.3	28.1	39.1	22.2	20.0
Queensland	13.7	11.8	12.5	3.1	0	5.0
South Australia	9.5	13.4	21.9	6.3	0	10.0
Western Australia	9.8	21.3	6.3	4.7	33.3	5.0
Tasmania	2.7	0.8	3.1	0	0	0
ACT	0.2	0.8	0	0	0	0
Northern Territory	3.2	4.7	0	1.6	5.6	0
<u>Education:</u>						
Less than 11 years	43.6	47.2	40.6	53.1	38.9	45.0
11-12 years	29.5	27.6	28.1	18.8	16.7	30.0
Tertiary	26.8	25.2	31.3	28.1	44.4	25.0
<u>Activity:</u>						
Working	87.4	82.7	84.4	82.8	61.1	85.0
Studying	5.4	10.2	6.3	7.8	22.2	0
Home duties	0.2	0	0	0	5.6	0
Unemployed	6.1	7.1	9.4	7.8	5.6	15.0
Other	0.9	0	0	1.6	5.6	0
<u>Religion:</u>						
Catholic	26.1	11.0	31.3	57.8	22.2	45.0
Other Christian	51.7	55.9	37.5	29.7	33.3	45.0
Muslim	0	0	0	6.3	5.6	0
Other	0.5	1.6	0	0	16.7	0
None	21.7	31.5	31.2	6.2	22.2	10.0
<u>Religiosity:</u>						
Practising	45.9	39.4	43.8	73.4	61.1	80.0
Not practising	54.1	60.6	53.2	26.6	38.1	20.0
<u>Came to Australia:</u>						
Before 15	-	52.8	65.6	56.2	27.8	50.0
After 15	-	47.2	34.4	43.8	72.2	50.0
Number of men	857	127	32	64	18	20

Table 3 (continued)

Characteristic	Birthplace					
	Australia	Other Eng. sp. countries	W. & E. Europe	S. Europe Mid. East	SE Asia, China	Else-where
FEMALES						
<u>Per cent distribution</u>						
<u>Age (years):</u>						
18-22	32.4	22.4	20.7	25.0	13.8	20.6
23-27	25.0	26.3	17.2	18.3	27.6	32.4
28-34	42.5	51.3	62.1	56.7	58.6	47.1
<u>Marital status:</u>						
Single	34.8	25.0	24.1	33.3	31.0	20.6
Married	52.9	59.2	69.0	63.3	62.1	70.6
Defacto	4.2	6.6	0	1.7	0	0
Separated	3.3	3.3	3.4	1.7	3.4	0
Divorced	4.4	5.3	3.4	0	3.4	0
Widowed	0.4	0.7	0	0	0	0
<u>Type of locality:</u>						
Metropolitan	67.1	75.0	75.9	86.7	86.2	91.2
Non-metropolitan	32.9	25.0	24.1	13.3	13.8	8.8
<u>State:</u>						
New South Wales	34.7	34.9	37.9	50.0	48.3	41.2
Victoria	23.4	19.7	27.6	25.0	17.2	20.6
Queensland	16.0	11.8	6.9	5.0	13.8	8.8
South Australia	10.6	11.8	6.9	8.3	6.9	5.9
Western Australia	9.2	17.1	13.8	11.6	10.3	20.6
Tasmania	2.9	2.0	6.9	0	0	0
ACT	0.7	0.7	0	0	0	0
Northern Territory	2.6	2.0	0	0	3.4	2.9
<u>Education:</u>						
Less than 11 yrs.	49.4	50.0	51.7	61.7	31.0	29.4
11-12 years	24.1	23.0	27.6	20.0	37.9	29.4
Tertiary	26.6	27.0	20.7	18.3	31.0	41.2
<u>Activity:</u>						
Working full time	35.7	32.2	34.5	31.7	41.4	64.7
Working part time	18.2	19.7	20.7	11.7	6.9	2.9
Studying	4.5	2.6	0	5.0	10.3	2.9
Home duties	37.1	43.4	41.4	4.17	41.4	26.5
Unemployed	4.4	2.0	3.4	10.0	0	2.9
<u>Religion:</u>						
Catholic	27.4	17.1	48.3	63.3	20.7	61.8
Other Christian	59.9	64.5	24.1	25.0	31.0	25.6
Muslim	0	0	0	5.0	0	2.9
Other	0.6	1.3	0	0	20.7	2.9
None	12.1	17.1	27.6	6.7	27.6	5.9
<u>Religiosity:</u>						
Practising	56.1	45.4	51.7	85.0	55.2	76.5
Not practising	43.9	56.4	48.3	15.0	44.8	23.5
<u>Came to Australia:</u>						
Before 15	-	48.7	79.1	66.7	31.0	26.5
After 15	-	51.3	20.9	33.3	69.0	73.5
Number of women	1,122	152	29	60	29	34

Table 4. . Men and women aged 20-34: per cent ever married by age group and birthplace.

Birthplace	Males			Female		
	20-24	25-29	30-34	20-24	25-29	30-34
Australia	22.0	64.8	83.9	44.2	80.3	91.1
U.K. and Ireland	25.7	67.6	86.1	50.0	82.4	92.6
Germany	25.8	65.8	83.4	47.6	81.1	91.3
Netherlands	32.8	74.6	89.2	54.9	86.6	93.7
Other N.W. Europe	29.2	57.9	79.7	57.0	78.3	89.9
Greece	27.8	72.4	89.9	64.6	92.8	97.2
Italy	29.0	72.9	88.6	55.4	88.2	95.4
Yugoslavia	28.6	75.1	90.0	71.7	93.4	97.0
Other S. Europe	32.3	74.6	86.1	64.3	90.7	95.3
Eastern Europe	22.3	57.3	81.1	53.9	81.1	92.5
Middle East	30.5	68.4	87.3	72.1	90.8	95.2
Africa	18.7	63.8	83.2	45.0	80.4	91.7
South Asia	17.9	60.2	84.9	46.7	82.6	91.4
Indo-China	22.0	55.7	79.8	44.9	69.5	81.2
Other Southeast, East Asia	12.1	54.1	80.8	36.8	77.2	84.9
U.S.A., Canada	17.6	58.3	79.2	38.0	72.9	86.6
Other America	23.8	69.7	87.2	53.0	87.2	92.6
New Zealand	20.0	55.3	80.3	36.9	71.1	87.2
Pacific Islands	18.8	63.0	82.1	43.3	76.8	89.1

Source: 1981 Census of Population and Housing

Table 5. Median age at first marriage: male and female respondents aged 28-34 by birthplace.

Birthplace	Males	Females
Australia	24.6 (285)	21.6 (477)
Other English speaking countries	24.3 (50)	21.4 (78)
W. & E. Europe	26.0 (16)	21.3 (18)
Southern Europe/Middle East	25.3 (36)	20.9 (34)
Southeast Asia, China	28.0 (6)	24.2 (17)

Note: The numbers in parentheses refer to the number of cases.

Table 6. Per cent of ever married men and women whose first marriage was still intact.

Birthplace	Males	Females
Australia	88.4	81.3
Other English speaking countries	86.2	76.0
W. & E. Europe	86.7	90.9
S. Europe/Middle East	97.6	95.0
Southeast Asia/China	83.3	90.0
Elsewhere	83.3	88.5

Notes: The small proportions in the Southern European/Middle East category whose first marriage had dissolved comprised 1 Greek male currently separated/divorced, 1 Italian female currently in a defacto relationship, and 1 Middle East female currently separated/divorced.

Table 7. Where respondents met or expected to meet their partners, by sex and birthplace groups.

Source	Birthplace					
	Australia	Other Eng. sp. countr.	W. & E. Europe	S. Europe Mid-East	SE Asia, China	Else-where
<u>Males with partners</u>						
Childhood	3	0	0	3	0	1
School, university	32	8	0	0	2	0
Parents, relatives	42	6	1	9	1	0
Friends	52	7	1	4	1	1
Recreation places	98	14	6	9	0	2
Church	10	3	1	2	1	0
Streets	49	11	0	1	0	0
Work	44	9	5	7	0	0
Other	59	11	3	7	0	1
Number of men	389	69	17	42	5	5
<u>Males without partners</u>						
School, university	40	8	1	2	4	0
Parents, relatives	6	0	2	1	1	0
Friends	80	5	3	5	2	4
Recreation places	131	19	5	4	2	4
Church	7	1	1	1	1	0
Streets	0	1	0	0	0	0
Work	6	1	0	0	0	0
Other*	198	23	3	9	3	7
Number of men	468	58	15	22	13	15
<u>Females with partners</u>						
Childhood	10	1	0	0	0	1
School, university	35	8	1	1	0	3
Parents, relatives	73	11	2	9	2	3
Friends	104	7	3	9	3	6
Recreation places	158	19	8	6	5	4
Church	18	1	0	0	1	0
Streets	68	14	0	7	1	3
Work	95	13	4	1	2	5
Other	80	26	2	6	4	2
Number of women	641	100	20	39	18	27
<u>Females without partners</u>						
School, university	49	1	0	1	3	1
Parents, relatives	8	4	0	1	2	0
Friends	75	9	3	3	2	3
Recreation places	87	11	1	5	0	0
Church	9	0	0	0	1	0
Work	9	1	0	0	0	0
Other*	224	26	5	11	3	3
Number of women	481	52	9	21	11	7

*Other includes those who did not expect to marry or would not be looking.

Table 8. Per cent of respondents with an Australian-born partner, or a partner born in the same region, by sex and birthplace group.

Birthplace of respondent	Per cent with an Australian-born partner		Per cent with partner from the same region	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Australia	88.4	83.2	88.4	83.2
Other English speaking countries	47.8	45.0	42.0	42.0
W. & E. Europe	64.7	40.0	23.5	35.0
Southern Europe				
Middle East	28.6	25.6	47.6	56.4
Southeast Asia, China	20.0	27.8	80.0	44.4
Elsewhere	40.0	25.9	40.0	33.3
All foreign-born*	42.8	36.8	57.2	63.2

*Refers to all foreign-born with an Australian-born partner and all foreign-born with a foreign-born partner.

Table 9. Attitude to partner's characteristics

Partner's characteristic	Birthplace						Total
	Australia	Other English sp. countries	W. & E. Europe	S. Europe Mid. East	S.E. Asia, China	Else- where	
Per cent considered characteristic important							
<u>MALES</u>							
Similar education	48.9	48.0	34.4	46.9	77.8	40.0	48.5
Similar social background	55.8	48.8	46.9	46.9	61.1	60.0	54.4
Attractive appearance	80.2	79.6	75.0	81.3	77.8	75.0	79.9
Similar ethnic background	32.0	30.7	18.8	34.4	27.8	25.0	31.4
Similar religious beliefs	32.9	30.7	28.2	50.0	50.0	50.0	34.1
Similar ideas	78.0	78.7	65.6	79.7	88.9	70.0	77.8
Similar occupational background	8.7	3.9	15.6	14.1	16.7	20.0	9.1
A great personality	76.9	79.5	78.1	68.8	83.4	80.0	77.0
Similar goals	81.3	82.6	84.4	76.6	88.9	65.0	81.2
<u>FEMALES</u>							
Similar education	53.5	53.3	34.5	48.3	65.5	58.9	53.3
Similar social background	61.2	56.5	34.5	55.0	62.1	52.9	59.7
Attractive appearance	59.2	56.6	41.4	56.7	62.1	58.8	58.5
Similar ethnic background	36.7	31.6	34.4	43.3	51.7	32.3	36.6
Similar religious beliefs	39.0	34.9	34.5	61.7	58.6	41.2	39.9
Similar ideas	79.5	78.3	75.9	68.3	86.2	64.7	78.6
Similar occupational background	11.7	8.6	10.3	15.0	27.6	2.9	11.6
A great personality	67.9	67.7	72.4	71.7	65.5	67.6	68.1
Similar goals	82.9	82.9	79.3	59.4	68.9	79.4	81.7

Table 10. Attitude to marriage: Per cent of respondents agreeing with each specific advantage/disadvantage of marriage.

Advantage/ Disadvantage of marriage	Birthplace					
	Australia	Other Eng. sp. countr.	W. & E. Europe	S. Europe Mid. East.	SE Asia Else- where	
<u>MALES</u>						
Economic security	45.4	44.1	43.7	54.7	44.4	50.0
Love, warmth & happiness	86.3	78.7	75.0	93.8	88.9	80.0
Regular sex life	82.5	70.9	90.7	90.6	77.8	85.0
Sense of responsibility	81.3	76.4	81.3	90.6	88.9	90.0
Having children	73.0	71.7	68.8	90.6	77.8	70.0
Easier to save money	35.6	33.8	40.6	40.6	55.6	55.0
No freedom/independence	32.1	33.8	34.4	31.6	66.7	55.0
Take one another for granted	46.9	51.9	31.3	35.9	44.5	55.0
No advantages	11.9	11.8	3.1	15.6	0	15.0
Marriage is for life	74.8	65.4	75.0	93.8	88.9	85.0
<u>FEMALES</u>						
Economic security	60.3	52.6	65.5	71.7	65.5	55.8
Love, warmth & happiness	83.9	79.6	89.7	90.0	86.2	76.5
Regular sex life	81.3	79.7	79.3	81.7	82.6	79.4
Sense of responsibility	72.5	65.2	72.4	81.7	79.3	82.3
Having children	64.0	64.5	65.5	80.0	58.6	70.5
Easier to save money	28.6	26.3	51.7	40.0	41.3	35.5
No freedom/independence	28.5	27.6	41.3	35.0	44.5	41.2
Take one another for granted	46.4	52.8	41.3	46.7	20.7	11.7
No advantages	11.9	13.4	10.3	13.3	20.7	11.7
Marriage is for life	73.1	67.8	68.9	78.3	65.5	79.4

Table 11. Ever married women: per cent ever had children and average number of children ever had, by age group and birthplace.

Birthplace	Per cent ever had children		Average number of children		Number of women	
	Age: Under 30	30-34	Under 30	30-34	Under 30	30-34
Australia	68.7	91.4	1.3	2.2	377	324
Other English speaking countries	78.7	86.2	1.4	2.1	47	58
W. & E. Europe	71.4	93.3	1.1	2.3	7	15
S. Europe & Middle East	80.0	88.0	1.3	2.1	15	25
Southeast Asia, China	85.7	92.3	1.9	1.6	7	13
Elsewhere	50.0	83.3	0.6	1.6	14	12
All	69.8	90.4	1.3	2.1	467	447

Table 12. Currently married women according to number of children desired and birthplace.

Birthplace	Per cent who wanted to have children numbering:					Average number desired	Number of women
	0	1	2	3	4 or more		
Australia	5.8	4.8	42.1	30.7	16.6	2.5	586
Other English speaking countries	7.9	2.2	50.6	28.1	11.2	2.3	89
W. & E. Europe	5.0	20.0	40.0	25.0	10.0	2.2	20
S. Europe & Middle east	8.1	2.7	45.9	27.0	16.3	2.4	37
Southeast Asia, China	5.5	16.7	66.7	5.5	5.5	1.9	18
Elsewhere	8.3	0	62.5	16.7	12.5	2.3	24
All	6.2	4.9	44.4	29.1	15.4	2.5	774

Table 13. Desired family size of currently married women, according to birthplace and other characteristics.

Characteristic	Birthplace					
	Australia	Other Eng. sp. countr.	W. & E. Europe	S. Europe, Mid-East	SE Asia, China	Else-where
<u>Average number of children desired</u>						
<u>Age (years)</u>						
Under 30	2.5	2.3	1.6	2.4	2.0	2.2
30-34	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.4	1.8	2.3
<u>Education</u>						
< 11 years	2.6	2.4	2.7	2.4	1.8	2.7
11-12 years	2.5	2.4	1.0	2.9	1.8	2.5
Tertiary	2.4	2.0	1.7	2.7	2.0	1.8
<u>Work status</u>						
Working	2.3	2.1	1.7	2.1	2.3	2.2
Not working	2.7	2.5	2.7	2.6	1.6	2.4
<u>Religion</u>						
Catholic	2.8	2.4	2.1	2.5	2.5	2.5
Other Christian	2.5	2.3	2.7	2.9	2.0	1.7
None	2.0	2.2	1.0	1.3	1.7	2.0
<u>Religiosity</u>						
Practising	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.2	2.4
Not practising	2.4	2.3	1.6	1.2	1.5	1.5
<u>Came to Australia</u>						
Before age 15	-	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.8
After age 15	-	2.3	2.0	2.5	1.8	2.2
All women	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.4	1.9	2.3

Table 14. Per cent of respondents currently with a partner who said they felt some pressure to have children, according to sex and birthplace.

Pressure from:	Birthplace					
	Australia	Other Eng. sp. countr.	W. & E. Europe	S. Europe	SE Asia, China	Else-where
<u>MALES</u>						
Parents	28.8	30.4	23.5	30.9	60.0	0
Friends	13.6	8.7	11.8	19.0	40.0	40.0
Partner	30.8	26.1	27.0	45.2	40.0	40.0
Relatives	18.5	13.0	17.7	16.7	40.0	40.0
Self	23.9	27.5	41.1	38.1	40.0	40.0
Number of men	389	69	17	42	5	5
<u>FEMALES</u>						
Parents	18.2	15.0	20.0	15.8	22.2	40.7
Friends	15.4	14.0	10.0	7.7	11.1	25.9
Partner	15.3	15.0	25.0	15.4	22.2	22.2
Relatives	17.5	19.0	15.0	12.8	27.8	25.9
Self	35.0	31.0	30.0	41.0	44.4	44.4
Number of women	641	100	20	39	18	27

Table 15. Men and women currently with a partner: per cent who would or did delay having children, according to reason and birthplace.

Reason	Birthplace					
	Australia	Other Eng. sp. countr.	W. & E. Europe	S. Europe Mid.East	SE Asia, China	Else-where
Did (would) delay until:	MALES					
Had enough money	45.5	43.5	17.6	38.1	40.0	100.0
Had steady job	36.8	36.2	29.4	40.5	60.0	80.0
Partner had job	2.6	7.2	5.9	4.8	40.0	40.0
Could cope	43.2	44.9	47.1	57.1	80.0	40.0
Partner could cope	44.0	52.2	58.8	57.1	80.0	60.0
Had a house	37.3	36.2	17.6	40.5	60.0	80.0
Marriage established	44.0	43.5	41.2	45.2	40.0	80.0
Number of men	389	69	17	42	5	5
	FEMALES					
Had enough money	33.9	28.0	30.0	28.2	27.8	25.9
Had steady job	7.3	5.0	0	7.7	11.1	3.7
Partner had job	27.5	24.0	15.0	20.5	16.7	18.5
Could cope	37.9	45.0	30.0	33.3	33.3	40.7
Partner could cope	35.7	38.0	25.0	23.1	22.2	37.0
Had a house	31.2	33.0	35.0	25.6	27.8	18.5
Marriage established	43.1	40.0	30.0	33.3	22.2	44.4
Number of women	641	100	20	39	18	27

Table 16. Advantages and disadvantages of having children most frequently mentioned by respondents.

Advantage/ disadvantage	Birthplace						All
	Australia	Other Eng. sp. countr.	W. & E. Europe	S. Europe Mid-East	SE Asia China	Else-where	
Per cent mentioning advantage/disadvantage							
MALES							
Watch grow up, teach	29.7	28.3	40.0	17.4	0	0	27.7
Me - more responsible	20.3	3.9	30.0	13.0	0	9.1	14.7
Satisfaction, love	20.3	8.7	20.0	17.4	0	0	17.7
Makes life fun	15.6	17.4	30.0	39.1	0	18.7	17.7
Gives meaning to life	11.3	10.9	0	21.7	25.0	45.4	13.1
Form family	9.8	15.2	40.0	26.0	25.0	27.3	13.1
Togetherneess	13.3	8.7	10.0	8.7	25.0	18.2	12.6
Do things together	10.2	13.0	10.0	21.7	0	0	10.9
Some one to work for	7.8	17.4	10.0	13.0	25.0	18.2	10.0
Fulfilment	10.9	8.7	10.0	4.3	0	0	9.7
Affects social life	18.7	21.7	20.0	4.3	0	9.1	17.7
Affects finances	14.8	10.9	20.0	0	0	9.1	13.1
Sleepless nights	14.8	13.0	0	8.7	0	0	13.1
Loss of freedom	12.5	8.9	10.0	0	0	0	10.6
Worries	6.6	6.5	20.0	8.7	0	9.1	7.1
Future fears	5.9	6.5	10.0	13.0	0	0	6.3
Discipline problems	5.5	6.5	10.0	13.0	0	0	6.0
Demanding	5.1	6.5	20.0	0	0	0	5.1
Less time, privacy	5.5	4.3	0	0	0	0	4.6
Affects marriage rel.	3.9	6.5	10.0	0	25.0	0	4.3
FEMALES							
Satisfaction	24.0	12.1	23.8	28.6	11.1	8.3	23.7
Makes life fun	18.7	21.8	19.0	35.7	50.0	25.0	20.7
Watch grow up, teach	20.3	18.7	23.8	25.0	11.1	12.5	19.9
Togetherneess	16.7	27.1	23.8	28.6	11.1	12.5	18.4
Form family	15.7	14.5	23.8	25.0	11.1	16.7	16.0
Me - more responsible	14.9	9.4	19.0	0	22.2	16.7	14.0
Change marriage, (+)	13.7	12.5	19.0	7.1	0	16.7	13.2
Meaning to life	12.2	7.2	9.5	10.7	0	12.5	11.2
Less lonely	11.1	11.5	14.3	3.6	0	12.5	10.8
Me - complete woman	10.3	8.3	9.5	10.7	5.5	4.2	10.0
Affects social life	12.7	24.0	4.8	3.6	5.5	4.2	13.1
Loss of freedom	11.5	22.9	9.5	7.1	5.5	8.3	12.5
Affects finances	11.0	15.6	0	3.6	5.5	16.7	11.0
Future fears	9.1	8.3	14.3	14.3	11.1	12.5	9.5
Discipline problems	8.3	8.3	14.3	0	5.5	0	7.8
Sleepless nights	8.1	4.2	14.3	0	11.1	8.3	7.6
Less time, privacy	8.6	6.2	0	3.6	0	0	7.4
Worries	5.4	5.2	0	28.6	16.7	20.8	6.8
Demanding	7.4	5.2	4.8	0	5.5	0	6.5
Lose self control	5.4	7.3	0	3.6	0	0	5.1
Number of men	256	46	10	23	4	11	350
Number of women	592	96	21	28	18	24	779